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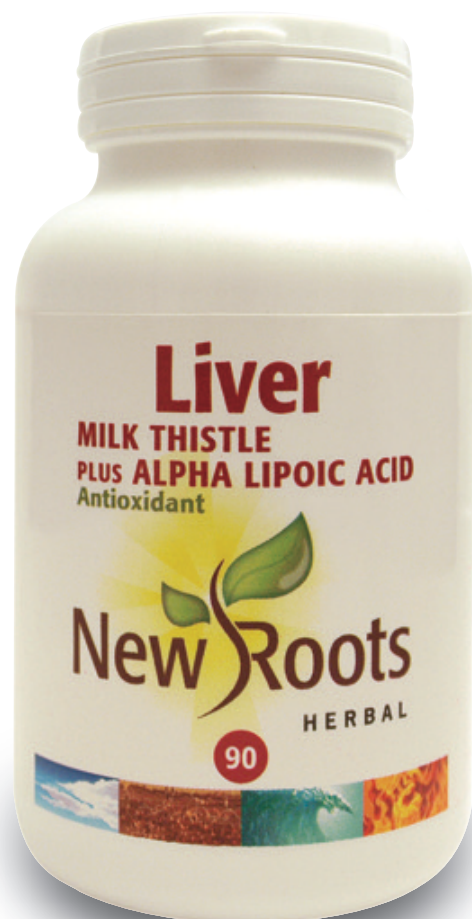
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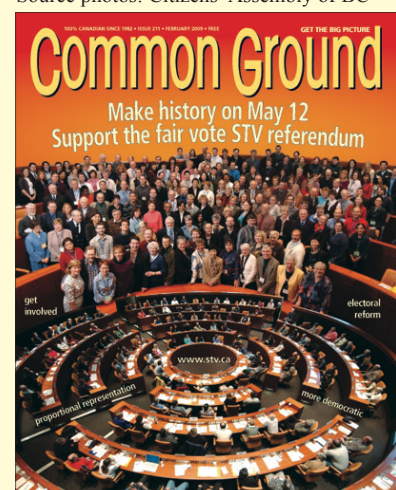
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## Making democracy healthy

**WRITING ON THE WALL** Joseph Roberts

On May 12, a referendum will be held across BC offering voters the opportunity to replace our current first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system with the far more democratic single transferable vote (STV). In order for STV to supplant FPTP, however, more than 60 percent of the total provincial vote is required as well as a second majority of ridings in BC. Progress was made in the 2002 referendum where the majority of ridings supported STV, plus 58 percent of the total vote chose STV, falling just two percent short of the 60 percent required to pass. This time around, let's make history and unanimously support the much fairer STV system. We the people will be better served by the more democratic STV system because it shifts the power from the status quo backroom party bosses to the citizens themselves. We encourage you to get involved and help ensure a healthy democracy.

In the FPTP voting system, many – if not the majority – of people's votes count for nothing. The corrosive effect of winner takes all steals representation from voters who did not choose the first-past-the-post front-runner. FPTP has resulted in fewer voters participating in BC elections because they get zero representation from their vote. But it does not have to be this way. No two electoral systems in the world are identical and with the huge variety to choose from, there are many better ways of counting votes than BC's current FPTP. Here's why: with FPTP, the individual in the riding with more votes than any one other becomes the MLA but then everyone else loses. For instance, if there are 10 names on the ballot and the "first past the post" leader

gets 10 percent of the total riding's vote – whereas the other nine people on the ballot come close but each gets slightly less than 10 percent of the vote, say between 9 and 10 percent with a small portion of spoilt ballots – the winner gets in with 10 percent. And because there is only one MLA per riding, approximately 90 percent of the votes cast amount for nothing! The majority of voters who did not vote for the one FPTP winner are left unrepresented. It even worse when you consider many have given up on voting at all.

After numerous elections based on the FPTP system, BC voters are disillusioned. Voter apathy is at an all time low with people's votes essentially being rendered useless if they did not vote for the FPTP winner. The overly simplistic FPTP inevitably results in unfair representation and the forming of governments that do not proportionally represent the wishes of the people, thereby making a mockery of democracy.

For generations, responsible, intelligent and concerned citizens have worked hard to offer an alternative to FPTP. This edition of *Common Ground* is dedicated to those individuals as well as to the people in the Citizens' Assembly who volunteered their time and energy to study, compare, research and choose a fairer and more proportionally representative electoral system. Help make history in BC's May 12 referendum during the provincial election. Your vote for BC-STV is a vote towards putting an end to an electoral system that has not accurately reflected the voice of the people. (For more information about STV, please see our feature article on page 10 and visit www.stv.bc).



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**Dr. Raymond Moody**, MD, PhD, is best-selling author of *Life After Life* and originator of the term "near-death experience."



**Dr. Edgar Mitchell**, BSc, PhD, is founder of the Institute of Noetic Sciences and the 6th man to walk on the moon.

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# Big pharma breaks the law and pays up

Can Health Canada's drug safety research money carry the same clout?

HEALTH

DRUG BUST *Alan Cassels*



"Drastic action is essential to preserve the integrity of medical science and practice and to justify public trust."

— *Journal of the American Medical Association*

You can learn a lot about the effects of drugs and the actions of drug manufacturers by peering into a courtroom. When you hear what the companies themselves have to say, in sworn testimony, about their drugs or their marketing tactics, you realize that we in the general public really only have an iceberg tip's worth of information about any drug on the market.

You can't deny that courts of law can get at a certain purity of truth, which emerges from the wringer of the legal system.

**Exhibit A** to support this argument is a major lawsuit settled last month in the US against drug giant Eli Lilly. The company was ordered to pay \$1.42-billion (US) to settle criminal and civil investigations. These charges stem from the way the drug manufacturer marketed its antipsychotic drug Zyprexa, (generic name olanzapine). Lilly executives explained that the key charge centred on how Lilly was advertising Zyprexa for ailments for which it was not approved.

A company trying to license its drug will come to the regulator with a series

of claims of what its drug can do. It is only those claims deemed to be supported by sufficient evidence that get approved by the FDA or Health Canada. However, while drugs are licensed only to treat certain specific conditions, our doctors are free to prescribe any drug for any patient for whatever reason they see fit, approved or not approved. The issue of "approval" is important because

ety so antipsychotic drugs like Zyprexa wouldn't have much of a market. I was wrong. Lilly has sold nearly \$40 billion (US) worth of Zyprexa since it was approved in 1996, making it, in fact, one of the biggest-selling drugs in the world.

Many of us had sensed there had to be something illegal about the way the drug was being marketed, but we had to

.....  
**Neurontin for pain, Neurontin for monotherapy, Neurontin for bipolar, Neurontin for everything. I don't want to see a single patient coming off Neurontin before they've been up to at least 4800 mg/day. I don't want to hear that safety crap either.**

— **Parke-Davis executive**  
.....

a company can only market its drug for "approved" uses. In other words, if your drug is approved to treat toenail fungus, the sales reps can't go pushing the drug for erectile dysfunction. That's against the law.

Zyprexa belongs to a relatively new class of antipsychotic drugs approved to treat people suffering from schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. I thought, OK, there can't be that many schizophrenics or people with bipolar out in soci-

wait until the court documents revealed what was actually happening.

A huge blockbuster drug, approved only for the treatment of relatively uncommon diseases, was obviously being taken by millions of people — despite its known and fearful side effects (mainly weight gain and diabetes) and its documented life-threatening severe adverse effects, (heart attacks and strokes). So why was an antipsychotic like Zyprexa so widely used?

The answer is what we call "off-label promotion." According to documents filed in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia, Lilly said it promoted Zyprexa for elderly people in the treatment of dementia, which is a use strictly not approved by Health Canada or the US Food and Drug Administration. The US attorney handling the case told a press conference, "Lilly completely ignored the law," making "hundreds of millions of dollars" from illegally promoting Zyprexa.

Here's the main kicker: not only is the drug *not* approved to treat dementia in the elderly, but Health Canada has said that prescribing this drug to elderly people is something that should emphatically *not* be done due to the risk of strokes. Yet if you were to wander the halls of the average seniors home in Canada, you'd find as many as a quarter of the residents taking these drugs.

**Exhibit B** in my argument that the law courts are great places to look to expand our knowledge about drugs is the drug Neurontin (gabapentin). This drug will go down in the history books as being off the scale in terms of its off-label promotion. Neurontin was approved in the mid-1990s as an "add-on" therapy for what they call "partial complex seizures." A small market, right? I mean, how many people suffer seizures and would therefore need drugs like Neurontin? Seems like a lot. By 2004, nearly \$3 billion worth of the drug was being sold.

David Franklin, a whistleblower from Parke-Davis (later bought out by Pfizer, which marketed the drug), set the wheels in motion for a huge lawsuit that followed. The result was public access to some of the most complete court documents ever assembled around the aggressive, off-label marketing of a drug. In the passage below, Franklin relates what a Parke-Davis executive said to him and his fellow sales people:

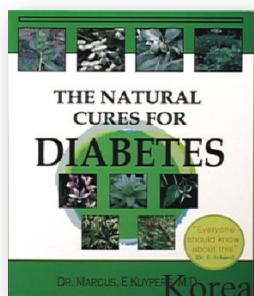
"I want you out there every day selling Neurontin... We all know Neurontin's not growing for adjunctive therapy, besides that's not where the money is. Pain management, now that's money. Monotherapy [for epilepsy], that's money... We can't wait for [physicians] to ask, we need [to] get out there and tell them up front. Dinner programs, CME [continuing medical education] programs, consultancies all work great but don't forget the one-on-one. That's where we need to be, holding their hand and whispering in their ear, Neurontin for pain, Neurontin for monotherapy, Neurontin for bipolar,

*continued p.17...*



# Do You Know?

**Many pharmaceutical drugs worsen diabetes, and some actually cause the disease!**



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From the moment this 91 paged book was first published by Human Love Publishing Co. in 2005, it began to draw keen attention of many diabetes experts and doctors around the world, as well as their patients. The book has been translated and published in China, Korea, Japan, US, and Australia since then. Regarding P 700, which is the natural treatment introduced in this book, researchers of prestigious universities declare that it is not just a symptomatic treatment, but, a 'cure' for Type II diabetes, and it restores normalcy for 70% of patients.

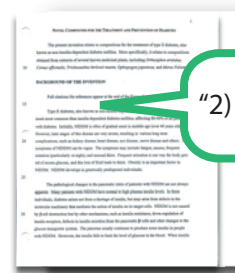


University of Calgary officials (UTI)



"A U of C treatment helps most Type II diabetics."

"This remedy will restore near normalcy for 70% of Type II diabetics."



"2) Cure of NIDDM"

University of Calgary document about P-700

National Diabetic Associations and Pharmaceutical Associations of various countries declared that P700 is **an ideal cure** (Chinese Nanjing Diabetes Associations)" and that **"This cures more than 70% of patients** (Korean Diabetes Association and Pharmacists Associations)."

Many medical doctors around the world are using the P700 treatment on themselves, as well as, recommending this natural treatment to their patients and publishing scientific studies on their findings.

Dr. Sichel says **"This is a path finding discovery in the reversal of diabetes"** **"Hope for the complete cure finally begins"** says Dr. Ho, and Dr. Echano says **"I know that this is highly recommended by major international diabetes associations."**

The efficacy and safety of this treatment is well recognized and established internationally. The Chinese equivalent of the US FDA issued an approval after rigorously performing animal, toxicology, and clinical tests on the products based on this natural treatment. A few governments followed suit. These approvals and permits cover 40% of world population now, and these products have been sold in more than 50 countries. The most reputed Chinese University, Tsinghua University, not only approved of this natural treatment, but also became the representative distributor in China.

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# Veggies for vitality

**NUTRISPEAK** Vesanto Melina MS, RD

The scrumptious aroma of potatoes baking in the oven on a winter afternoon. Minestrone soup simmering, bringing an invitation from onion, garlic and herbs. The vibrant reds, greens and purples of a rainbow-hued salad. The explosion of flavour when you bite into an avocado and tomato sandwich.

If the word “vegetables” doesn’t conjure in your mind sensations of colour, fragrance, delicious flavour and bountiful health, it’s time to update your attitude about these amazing foods. When we have a savoury soup and salad for lunch, and build our dinner around veggies, we consume a wealth of vitamins, minerals and other nutritious compounds.

More than any other group of foods, vegetables have proven their worth as cancer fighters and as our powerful protectors. This is a great time to make the acquaintance of new members of this family of plant foods and also to discover what powerful allies they can be in supporting your health.

One of the best things that veggies have going for them is an abundance of protective phytochemicals (plant chemicals). These substances provide many of the colours that make the produce aisles so attractive and vibrant. Veggies also give you more bang for your buck, in terms of providing vitamins, minerals and protection against disease, per calorie and per mouthful, compared with any other group of foods.

The recipe shown is from our newest book, *The Raw Food Revolution Diet*\*. This bean-free hummus has all the flavour of traditional Middle Eastern hummus and is full of nutrients, including bone-strengthening calcium. It’s tasty with raw veggies. To expand your hori-

zons about which veggies you can eat raw, here are a few ideas: asparagus tips, broccoli florets, carrot sticks, cauliflower florets, celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, cucumber discs, green onions, green pea pods, jicama sticks, parsnip sticks, peppers (red, yellow and green), snow peas, zucchini strips or circles.

## The Raw Food Diet Revolution

A trend that is sweeping North America is the raw foods movement. Some people are motivated by a concern about their bulging waistlines, others by the abundance of protective antioxidants and phytochemicals in plant foods. Many are inspired to increase their intake of uncooked veggies and fruits without adhering to an entirely raw diet. Are raw diets nutritionally adequate? What are the potential pitfalls? Are they good for children? Can a raw or mainly raw diet form the basis for a successful weight loss plan? I will be delivering a seminar entitled *The Raw Food Diet Revolution* at The Wellness Show. See information below.

*Vesanto Melina delivers The Raw Food Diet Revolution seminar at The Wellness Show, Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Ctr, 999 Canada Place, Sun. Feb. 8, 12:30pm. Drop by the Book Publishing Company booth (620) and say hello.*

[www.thewellnessshow.com](http://www.thewellnessshow.com),

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\*Authors: Cherie Soria, Brenda Davis and Vesanto Melina (*The Book Publishing Company*, 2008.)

**Attend a free presentation** by Vesanto, “Rx for Healthy Eating” in Langley’s Walnut Grove Library, Wed. Feb. 11 at 7 pm

## Zucchini Hummus

Makes 1-2/3 cups (5 servings)

Serve hummus with raw veggies or as “Romaine Boats” on the inner leaves of a head of Romaine lettuce, topped with diced tomatoes and alfalfa sprouts.

1 small zucchini, peeled and chopped (1 cup/250 mL, firmly packed)	1 tsp. salt
3 1/2 Tbsp. lemon juice	1/4 tsp. ground cumin (optional)
1 Tbsp. flaxseed oil or olive oil	1/8 tsp. cayenne
1-4 cloves garlic	1/2 cup sesame tahini
1 tsp. paprika	1/3 cup sesame seeds, soaked 4 hours and drained

Place in a blender the zucchini, lemon juice, oil, garlic, paprika, salt, cumin (if using) and cayenne. Purée. Add tahini and sesame seeds and purée until perfectly smooth and creamy. Store in a glass jar or other covered container, refrigerated, for up to four days.

Note: This recipe can be made in a food processor, although the mixture will contain whole sesame seeds, rather than being smooth. Alternatively, you can replace the seeds with 1/3 cup more tahini plus a little water.



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# Fair voting in BC

The Citizen's Assembly worked it out in 2004

We can make it happen in 2009



by Nick Loenen

Citizens' Assembly in the Wosk Centre for Dialogue

On May 12, British Columbians will elect their next government. They will also vote to replace the current "first-past-the-post" voting system with a proportional system known as the BC single transferable vote (BC-STV), which was almost unanimously recommended by the BC Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, pictured above. This will give British Columbians:

- 1) Fair election results.
- 2) Effective local representation.
- 3) Greater voter choice.

You can help. Learn more at:  
[www.stv.ca](http://www.stv.ca)  
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On October 24, 2004, after nearly one year of discussion and deliberation, the Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform voted to recommend replacing BC's current voting system, known as "first-past-the-post," with a single transferable vote system adapted to our province's needs. It is called BC-STV. The randomly selected 161 members of the Assembly, consisting of one woman and one man from each constituency, supported the recommendation almost unanimously.

The historic vote followed three hours of final discussions. At the end of that debate, Vaughn Palmer, *Vancouver Sun's* senior political columnist, turned to Les Leyne, his counterpart at Victoria's *Times Colonist* and asked, "Les, have we ever seen a political debate of such high calibre conducted with so much civility and goodwill?"

That was a fine tribute to the ordinary British Columbians who made up the Assembly, their work and their public mindedness, but it is also a shameful indictment of the legislature, the political parties and our political culture. Civility and goodwill? Why can our governing institutions not be more like

the Citizens Assembly? Is that not what Canadians want?

The Assembly recommended a preferential ballot. Instead of voters selecting one of many candidates, voters rank any number of candidates. Voters don't vote many times. Each voter gets just one vote. Think of it as one dollar's worth, but the dollar might be spread around in support of more than one candidate, based on how the voter ranks the candidates. That is the essence of the preferential ballot.

What does a preferential ballot do for politics? It has a civilizing influence. Two real, live examples: I was a candidate in the 1993 federal election. The party nomination meeting was contested by five and conducted by preferential ballot. It was clear from the start that no one would win on the first count. The winning candidate would need second and third place support from members whose first loyalty was with a competitor. Is that conducive to negative, personal attacks? Of course not. I was constructive and found common ground with some of the other candidates and their supporters and hence won the nomination.

Some years ago, the then president of the Richmond non-partisan association phoned to say that prior to an upcoming

nomination meeting to fill one slot for a by-election, membership numbers had suddenly swelled from the normal 300 to 400 to nearly 3,000.

Three competing blocks of instant voters were determined to get the nomination. I advised the president to go with a preferential ballot. They did and not one of those three big camps won. Those large groups competed with each, but a fourth candidate had built bridges to all three of the big groups and won on the fourth count.

First-past-the-post, our current voting system, is a winner-take-all system. Only one candidate can win. Only one party can win; all others are losers. In our system, there is no constructive role for losers. Politicians win by attacking and diminishing others. Canadians don't like attack ads, but under first-past-the-post, that is how it is done.

Legendary BC premier WAC Bennett often said, "Politics is war by another name." Winston Churchill said, "The difference between war and politics is this: In war you get killed but once; in politics, often." Must it be thus? No. Politics is not war and should not be conducted as if it were.

A preferential ballot rewards con-



structive behaviour; you win by building bridges, by reaching out. It promotes the politics of inclusion, cooperation and consultation. It does not thrive on conflict; it thrives on conflict resolution.

You want the legislature and parliament to be more like the Citizens Assembly? Change to BC-STV. Are you offended by the recent events in Ottawa, a politics that thrives on placing party interest ahead of the public interest? Change to BC-STV.

Today, faced with unprecedented public policy challenges and the need to rescue an economy destroyed by excessive self-interest, we need politics that are constructive, a system that rewards politicians for placing the common good ahead of partisan interests. We need the Citizens Assembly's recommendation – BC-STV.

Electoral reform will not solve all our problems, but no parliamentary reform

The question is can we change the voting system? Yes, we can. In 2005, British Columbians came within a whisker. This time, the movement for electoral reform is better organized with more feet on the ground and voters are more knowledgeable. Building on that solid majority of 58 percent who supported the Assembly's recommendation last time, people will be invited to join that majority, and perhaps, perversely, but best of all, recent events in Ottawa have angered Canadians who know we deserve better.

It can be done, but it is up to ordinary British Columbians. On this issue, political leaders will follow only if the people lead. Without you, it will not happen.

We have just one last chance on May 12 and I ask you to make a commitment.

Let each of us resolve, and all of us together resolve, to commit our energies and our resources for the next few months

**Can we change the voting system? Yes, we can. In 2005, British Columbians came within a whisker. This time, the movement for electoral reform is better organized with more feet on the ground and voters are more knowledgeable... We have just one last chance on May 12 and I ask you to make a commitment.**

or lasting democratic reform will take root until we have a voting system that rewards those who place the common good ahead of partisan advantage.

Electoral reform is not sufficient, but it is a necessary condition for all other reforms. It must be thus. Why? Politics are about power and the voting system allocates power. Under a changed voting system, political power is dispersed and shared political behaviour becomes more civilized.

Changing the rules by which political power is allocated is the first and highest priority.

to this great undertaking that was born in the Citizens Assembly among the people's representatives. This is an undertaking that transcends all of us. It is an undertaking to make politics more civilized and to rekindle the promise of democracy for our province and for our nation.

Can we do it? Yes, we can!

*Nick Loenen, a former Richmond councillor and MLA, has written extensively on voting system reform and can be reached at [nick.loenen@stv.ca](mailto:nick.loenen@stv.ca). To learn more and to get involved, visit [www.stv.ca](http://www.stv.ca)*

## The Single Transferable Vote (STV)

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# Obama and the return of the real

by Jonathan Schell

The inauguration of Barack Obama, whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant, is both a culmination and a beginning. The culmination is the milestone represented by the arrival of a black man in the office of president of the United States. That achievement reaches back to the founding ideals of the Republic – “all men are created equal” – which have been fulfilled in a new way, even as they resonate around a world in which for centuries white imperialists have subjected people of colour to oppression. The event fully justifies the national and global jubilation it has touched off. This much is truly accomplished, signed and sealed.

But what of the hour, the broad shape of the new world that Obama and all of us will face? If only the economic crisis were involved, the path ahead would have something of the known and familiar. Economic cycles come and go and even the Great Depression eased up in a little more than a decade. But this year's crisis is attended by, or embedded in, at least four others of even larger scope. The second is the shortage of natural resources, beginning with fossil fuels. Oil prices have fallen sharply from their peak of last summer, but does anyone doubt that when the economy bounces back those prices will rise with it?

A third crisis – less on the public mind, perhaps, because it is so old it is taken for granted – is the spread of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction. A fourth crisis is the ecological one, comprising global warming, the wholesale human-caused annihilation of species, population growth, water and land shortage and much else. Like nuclear danger, the planetary ecological crisis threatens something that has never been at stake before our era: the natural foundations of life upon which humans and all species depend for survival. Economic and military ups and downs are for a season only. Extinction is forever.

At a glance, this tangle of crises might seem merely to be the result of a colossal accident – a world-historic pileup on the global thruway. Yet in addition to being interconnected, the crises have striking features in common, suggesting shared roots. To begin with, all are self-created. They arise from pathologies of our own activity, or perhaps hyperactivity. The Greek tragedians understood well those disasters whose seeds lie above all in

one's own actions. No storm or asteroid or external enemy is the cause. Today, the economic crash is the result of investment run amok: The “masters of the universe” are the authors of their own (and everyone's) downfall. The nuclear weapons that threaten to return in wrath to American cities were born in New Mexico. The oil is running short because we are driving too many cars to too many shopping malls. The global ecosphere is heading toward collapse because of the success, not the failure (until recently), of the modern economy. The invasion of Iraq was the American empire's self-inflicted wound – a disaster of choice, so to speak. All we had to do to escape it was not to do it. Here and elsewhere, the work of our own hands rises up to strike us.

tions, like the god Saturn, devour their children. We are committing a slow motion, cross-generational equivalent of this offence. My generation, the baby boomers – ominously nicknamed “the boomers” – has been cannibalizing the future to provision the present. Though we are not killing our children directly, we are spending their money, eating their food, cutting down their cherry orchards. Intergenerational justice has been a subject more fit for academic seminars than for newspaper headlines. The question has been what harm are we doing to generations yet unborn? But the time frame has been shortened and the malign transactions are now occurring between generations still alive. The dollars we have spent are coming directly out of our

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**At a glance, this tangle of crises might seem merely to be the result of a colossal accident – a world-historic pileup on the global thruway. Yet in addition to being interconnected, the crises have striking features in common, suggesting shared roots. To begin with, all are self-created.**

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All the crises are also the result of excess, not scarcity. Too much credit was packaged in too many ways by people who were too smart, too busy, too greedy. Our energy use was too great for the available reserves. The nuclear weapon overfulfilled the plans for great-power war, making it – and potentially ourselves – obsolete through over-success. The economic activity of humanity – the “throughput” of productivity, to use James Gustave Speth's term for the sheer quantity of natural stuff processed by the economy and dumped back into the ecosphere – was too voluminous to be sustained by fragile natural systems. The environmentalists' word “sustainability” applies more broadly. The collateralized debt obligations, the oil use, the spread of WMDs, the military pretensions of empire, all are “unsustainable” and crashing at once. Taken together, the crises add up to a new era of limits, which now are pressing in on all sides to correct overreaching.

All the crises (but especially those that are endangering the ecosphere) involve theft by the living from their posterity. It's often said that revolu-

children's paychecks. The oil we burn is being drawn down from their reserves. The nuclear weapons we cling to for a dubious “security” will burn down their cities. The atmosphere we are heating up will scorch their fields and drown their shorelines. A “new era of responsibility” must above all mean responsibility to them. If it is true that all the crises are part of this larger crisis, then the economic crisis may simply be the means by which the larger adjustment is being set in motion, in effect dictating a forced march into the sustainable world.

All the crises are characterized by double standards, which everywhere block the way to solutions. One group of nations, led by the United States, lays claim to the lion's share of the world's wealth, to an exclusive right to possess nuclear weapons, to a disproportionate right to pollute the environment and even to a dominant position in world councils, while everyone else is expected to accept second-class status. But since solutions to all the crises must be global to succeed, and global agreement can only be based on equity, the path to success is cut off.

Finally, all the crises display one more



common feature: all have been based on the wholesale manufacture of delusions. The operative word here is "bubble." A bubble, in the stock market or anywhere, is a real-world construct based on fantasies. When the fantasy collapses, the construct collapses and people are hurt. Disillusion and tangible harm go together; as imaginary wealth and power evaporate, so does real wealth and power. The equity exposed as worthless was always phony, but real people really lose their jobs. The weapons of mass destruction in the invaded country were fictitious, but the war and the dying are actual. The "safety" provided by nuclear arms is waning, if it ever existed, but the holocaust, when it comes, though fantastical, will be no fantasy. The "limits on growth" were denied, but the oil reserves didn't get the message. The "uncertainty" about global warming – cooked up by political hacks and backed by self-interested energy companies – is fake, but the Arctic ice is melting anyway.

#### A new stance toward reality

One day, someone will undertake a comprehensive study of how all these bubbles grew and why they were inflated at the same time. It will be a story of a crisis of integrity of the institutions at the apex of American life. It will recount how the largest government, business, military and media organizations, as if obedient to a single command, began to tell lies to themselves and others in pursuit of or subservience to wealth and power. Individual deceivers must arrange their untruths by themselves, by flat-out conscious lying, self-deception or a com-

ological, used to supplant, not illumine, reality; of new offices created to draw false new conclusions from old facts; of threat inflation; of the sinking careers of truth-tellers and the rising careers of truth-twisters.

It would be interesting, for instance, to compare the creation of the illusions of the real estate bubble with the creation of the claim that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. In both cases, contrary facts were readily available at the base of the system, but were filtered out as the reports went up the chain. For a somewhat contrasting, top-down model, the White House method for suppressing the truth about global warming within government agencies is instructive. In that case, the science was duly gathered, but often squelched at the last minute by political appointees editing the reports.

A concluding chapter of the study will note that the rudiments of a new stance toward reality began to be articulated. Its motto can be the famous comment a senior Bush adviser made to writer Ronald Suskind, whom he belittled as belonging to the "reality-based community," which, the adviser said, believed that "solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." But that was no longer true, for "we're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality." Over at the American International Group, the recipient of \$152.5 billion in federal bailout funds, then-chief Maurice Greenberg was saying much the same thing in happier days: "This is never going to get any better than it is today. We're so big, we're

**Obama must batter his way out of the various bubbles and lay his hands on what is real immediately. It will not be easy. His election has done part of the job, but the mists of illusion still hover over the land. Fantasies of wealth and power, not to speak of superpower, die hard. Happy hour is more pleasant than the morning after.**

bination of the two. Huge bureaucracies have wider options. Banks, hedge funds, ratings agencies, regulatory agencies, intelligence services, the White House, the Pentagon and mainstream news organizations can grind inconvenient truths to dust, layer by bureaucratic layer, until the convenient lies that had been wanted all along are presented to the satisfied money or war-hungry decision makers at the top. The study of these operations will be a story of groupthink; of basic facts relegated to footnotes; of wishes tweaked into facts; of deepening secrecy; of complex models, mathematical or ide-

never going to swim against the tide. We are the tide." In short, the relationship between observation and action had been reversed. Reality was not the field of operation in which you acted and whose limits you must respect; it was, like a play or movie, a scenario to be penned by human authors. Fact had to adjust to ideology, not the other way around.

Obama, of course, cannot wait for such a study to appear. He must batter his way out of the various bubbles and lay his hands on what is real immediately. It will not be easy. His election

*continued p.31...*

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With regard to illness, this is what it means. Illness is part of your life situation. As such, it has a past and a future. Past and future form an uninterrupted continuum, unless the redeeming power of the Now is activated through your conscious presence. As you know, underneath the various con-

the image, it attacks you back. If you accept the image no matter what it is, if you become friendly toward it, it cannot *not* become friendly toward you. This is how you change the world.

Illness is not the problem. You are the problem – as long as the egoic mind is in control. When you are ill or disabled, do not feel that you have failed in some way; do not feel guilty. Do not blame life for treating you unfairly, but do not blame yourself either. All that is resistance. If you have a major illness, use it for enlightenment. Anything “bad” that happens in your life, use it for enlightenment. Withdraw time from the illness. Do not give it any past or future. Let it force you into intense present-moment awareness and see what happens.

.....  
**Become an alchemist. Transmute base metal into gold, suffering into consciousness, disaster into enlightenment.**  
.....

ditions that make up your life situation, which exists in time, there is something deeper, more essential: your Life, your very Being in the timeless Now.

As there are no problems in the Now, there is no illness either. The belief in a label that someone attaches to your condition keeps the condition in place, empowers it and makes a seemingly solid reality out of a temporary imbalance. It gives it not only reality and solidity, but also a continuity in time that it did not have before. By focusing on this instant and refraining from labelling it mentally, illness is reduced to one or several of these factors: physical pain, weakness, discomfort or disability. That is what you surrender to – now. You do not surrender to the idea of “illness.”

Allow the suffering to force you into the present moment, into a state of intense conscious presence. Use it for enlightenment. Surrender does not transform what is, at least not directly. Surrender transforms you. When you are transformed, your whole world is transformed because the world is only a reflection. We spoke about this earlier.

If you looked in the mirror and did not like what you saw, you would have to be mad to attack the image in the mirror. That is precisely what you do when you are in a state of non-acceptance. And, of course, if you attack

Become an alchemist. Transmute base metal into gold, suffering into consciousness, disaster into enlightenment. Are you seriously ill and feeling angry now about what I have just said? Then that is a clear sign that the illness has become part of your sense of self and that you are now protecting your identity, as well as protecting the illness. The condition that is labelled “illness” has nothing to do with who you truly are.

When disaster strikes

As far as the still unconscious majority of the population is concerned, only a critical limit-situation has the potential to crack the hard shell of the ego and force them into surrender and so into the awakened state. A limit-situation arises when, through some disaster, drastic upheaval, deep loss or suffering, your whole world is shattered and doesn't make sense anymore. It is an encounter with death, be it physical or psychological. The egoic mind, the creator of this world, collapses. Out of the ashes of the old world, a new world can then come into being.

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# Transcend judgement

UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

*Nothing is more precious than peace. Peace is the most basic starting point for the advancement of humankind.*  
— Daisaku Ikeda

A ubiquitous quality among humans is the tendency to judge others, regardless of age, culture or geographical region. Of course, this is the work of ego. Interestingly, the judgement of others is always relative to the one doing the judging. That is, others are judged to the extent that they differ from the one judging.

.....  
**When the soul looks at others, it sees that which is common to all. It sees with love and compassion and desires that no harm come to anyone.**  
.....

The vegetarian may judge the meat-eater, who in turn judges the vegetarian. The abstainer judges the drinker for his indulgence, while the drinker judges the abstainer for his unwillingness to indulge. The person of faith judges the non-believer, while the non-believer judges the faithful. Such examples are endless whether we are looking at interpersonal relationships or more global perspectives.

Significantly, the one judging always believes he or she knows the way things ought to be. This "truth" becomes the standard against which others are judged. Those judging feel justified in their criticisms due to their conviction that their beliefs are the right ones.

It is no wonder there is so much conflict amongst individuals, groups and countries. Whenever there are two sides with differing viewpoints and both believe they are right, conflict is inevitable. This is the essence of polarity and it is the way in which ego keeps us stuck in its old, primitive ways.

As we evolve individually and as a species, we come to see that differing perspectives are the norm and that no one's "truth" is more true than another's. We come to respect the viewpoints of others and see they are as valid for them as our views are for us.

We cease telling others they are wrong and insisting we are right. This opens the way for genuine dialogue and understanding. We seek to understand one another rather than fighting each other.

Once there is understanding, it is possible to work together to find or create solutions. This leads to cooperation and

collaboration rather than crisis and conflict. This seems so simple and self-evident, yet it remains the exception rather than the rule in human interactions. If we understand the concept, why is it so difficult to live it?

The desire for peaceful, harmonious relationships and way of living is the natural inclination of the soul. When the soul looks at others, it sees that which is common to all. It sees with love and compassion and desires that no harm come to anyone. Soul sees that we truly are all the same; it is only the packaging that is dif-

ferent and that sometimes confuses us.

Ego, on the other hand, is much like the two-year-old who can only see what it wants and has no ability to perceive a situation from the perspective of another. It keeps re-iterating its own position over and over again, growing increasingly frustrated at not getting its way. It wants only for the other to adopt its own viewpoint and give it what it wants.

In such a situation, there is but one criterion that determines the outcome. The one with the most power wins out. However, being most powerful does not mean your outcome is the best for all involved or serves the highest good. Outcomes based on power create resentment and often an escalation of power on the other side.

So on the one hand we have ego that champions its own perspective and belief in its "rightness," ultimately resorting to power to get its way, and then we have soul, which views differences with compassion and understanding, seeking wisdom as a guide to peaceful resolutions and harmonious outcomes.

As always, the choice is ours. We can continue unconsciously allowing ego to chart our path and colour our lives or we can step up to soul awareness, carrying ourselves and others to a higher level of being human.

*Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist and author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. For more articles, permission to reprint and information about her books and "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit [www.gwen.ca](http://www.gwen.ca)*

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# The Spirit of Love

YOGA

by Deepak Chopra



Like the tiny spark of fire  
that consumes a forest, the  
spark of love is all you need  
to experience love in its full  
power and glory, in all its  
aspects, earthly and divine.

Love is spirit...

In the West, what we generally call love is mostly a feeling, not a power. This feeling can be delicious, even ecstatic, but there are many things love is meant to do that feelings cannot. When love and spirit are brought together, their power can accomplish anything. Then love, power and spirit are one.

There has never been a spiritual master – not Buddha, Krishna, Christ or Mohammed – who wasn't a messenger of love, and the power of the message has always been awesome. It has changed the world. Perhaps the very immensity of such teachers has made the rest of us reticent. We do not accept the power love can create inside of us and, therefore, we turn our backs on our divine status.

Love is spirit. Spirit is the self.

Self and spirit are the same. Asking, "What is spirit?" is just a way of asking, "Who am I?" There isn't spirit outside you; you are it. Why aren't you aware of it? You are, but only in a limited way,

like someone who has seen a glass of water, but not the ocean. Your eyes see because in spirit you are the witness to everything. You have thoughts because in spirit you know all. You feel love toward another person because in spirit you are infinite love.

Restoring the spiritual dimension to love means abandoning the notion of a limited self with its limited ability to love, and regaining the self with its unbounded ability to love. The "I" that is truly you is made of pure awareness, pure creativity, pure spirit. Its version of love is free from all memories or images from the past. Beyond all illusion is the source of love – a field of pure potential. That potential is you. What is the path?

The most valuable thing you can bring into any relationship is your spiritual potential. This is what you have to offer when you begin to live your love story at the deepest level. Like the seed needed to start the life of a tree, your spiritual potential is the seed for your growth in love. Nothing is more precious. Seeing yourself with the eyes of love makes it natural to see others that way too. You will be able to say of your beloved, as the poet Rumi does: "You are the secret of God's secret. You are the mirror of divine beauty."

The path to love is something you consciously choose to follow and everyone who has ever fallen in love is shown the first step on that path. The unfolding of spiritual potential has been the chief concern of all the great seers, saints, prophets, masters and sages in human history. Theirs was a carefully charted quest for the self, a far cry from our notion of love as a messy, emotional affair.

In India, the spiritual path is called *Sadhana* and although a tiny minority of people give up normal life to wander the world as seekers of enlightenment (monks or *sadhus*), everyone, from those in the most ancient civilization of Vedic India until today, considers their life to be *Sadhana*, a path to the self. Although the self seems separated from us, it is actually intertwined in everything a person thinks, feels or does. The fact that you do not intimately know your self is amazing, if you come to think about it. Looking for your self, the Vedic sages declared, is like a thirsty fish looking for water. But as long as the self has yet to be found, *Sadhana* exists.

The goal of the path is to transform your awareness from separation to unity. In unity, we perceive only love, express only love, are only love.

While the inner transformation is taking place, every path must have some outer form to sustain it. In India, a person's nature leads him to the style of path appropriate to reaching fulfillment. Some people are naturally intellectual and are therefore suited to the path of knowledge, or *Gyana*. Some are more devotional and are suited to the path of worship, or *Bhakti*. Some are more outwardly motivated and are suited to the path of action, or *Karma*.

The three are not mutually exclusive; ideally, one would include in one's lifestyle daily periods of study, worship and service. All three approaches would then be integrated into a single path. It is, however, entirely possible to be so taken with a single approach that your whole existence may be centred on reading the scriptures, contemplation and scholarly debate – the life of *Gyana*. Or you may spend your time meditating, chanting and participating in temple rituals – the life of *Bhakti*. Or you could do social work, apply yourself to mental and physical purification and do God's bidding in daily activity – the life of *Karma*. Even in the most traditional sectors of India today, these paths have broken down, giving way to modern lifestyles in which study and work have little or nothing to do with spiritual aspirations.

What does this mean for a Westerner who has never been exposed to *Sadhana*? I propose that being on the spiritual path is such a natural and powerful urge that everyone's life, regardless of culture, obeys it. A path is just a way to open yourself to spirit, to God, to love. These are aims we all may cherish, but our culture has given us no established, organized way to reach them. Indeed, never in history has a seeker been confronted with such a disorganized and chaotic spiritual scene.

What we are left with is relationships. The desire to love and be loved is too powerful ever to be extinguished and fortunately a spiritual path exists based upon this unquenchable longing. The expression "path to love" is not simply a metaphor; it reappears throughout spiritual history in many guises. The most ancient version is the *Bhakti* or devotional tradition from Vedic India, in which all forms of love ultimately serve the search for God.

The Sufis of Islam have their own devotional lineage. Rumi, who I quote so often, was more than a poet; he was a great teacher of this path. To him, God was

the sweetest, most desirable lover, whose touch he could feel against the skin:

"When it's cold and raining, you are more beautiful. And the snow brings me even closer to your lips. The inner secret, that which was never born, you are that freshness, and I am with you now."

Christ initiated another version of the path in his supreme teaching, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus always spoke of God as a loving father. The Christian version of the path is therefore a relationship not so much between lovers as between parent and child or a shepherd and his flock (we shouldn't forget, though, the image of Christ as bridegroom and the worshipper's soul as the bride).

So it isn't the tradition that is lacking. One might more fairly say that in most religions the teaching of love, as originally presented, seems to have faded, to become more an ideal than a practical reality. But amidst all the confusion and breakdown of traditional teaching, there is still the spark of love that brings two people together, and out of that, a path can be made.

Like the tiny spark of fire that consumes a forest, the spark of love is all you need to experience love in its full power and glory, in all its aspects, earthly and divine. Love is spirit and all experiences of love, however insignificant they seem, are actually invitations to the cosmic dance. Within every love story hides the wooing of the gods and goddesses.

In a different age, the most fleeting of infatuations had spiritual meaning; the nearness of God in the beloved was taken seriously. Since the advent of Freud, however, psychologists have assured us that falling in love is illusory; the sense of ecstasy that is part of falling in love is illusory; the sense of ecstasy that is part of falling in love isn't realistic. We must learn to accept the temporary nature of romance and disregard the "projected fantasy" that we might be as immortal and invulnerable as passionate lovers feel.

We would therefore have to be skeptical of Walt Whitman when he rapturously declares, "I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as myself. (They do not know how immortal, but I know)."

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It would become the mother of all court actions against illegal marketing by a company; the payouts were almost a billion dollars, at that time the biggest legal action ever taken against a drug company. The court documents reveal the whole gamut of tricks used to manipulate information: suppressing publications, training and using local doctors to serve as paid speakers for the drug, cultivating "thought leaders," influencing academics with research grants, appointing people to "advisory boards" that worked to launder payments to physicians and lots and lots of "unrestricted educational grants" to do what was needed to sell this drug.

In an article in December's *New England Journal of Medicine*, it was noted that the marketing of Neurontin was based on "the systematic use of deception and misinformation to create a biased evidence base and manipulate physicians' beliefs and prescribing behaviours."

The 8,000 pages of corporate documents now in the public domain reveal the tactics used by a company to create a multibillion-dollar blockbuster out of a drug that should have gone nowhere. These documents are available in a searchable digital library at the University of California in San Francisco. ([www.dida.library.ucsf.edu](http://www.dida.library.ucsf.edu)). The class-action suit which followed also generated detailed testimony, searchable through the US Federal Judiciary's Public Access to Court Electronic Records Service Center.

How much off-label prescribing happens? About 20 percent of drugs in the US are written to treat a condition for which the drug was not approved, according to a 2006 study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

What's a patient to do in all of this? For starters, ask your doctor, "Is this drug you are about to prescribe me actually "approved" for the condition or disease for which I would take it? It might be best to first try the proven, standard and "approved" therapies."

Clearly, we shouldn't have to wait for the courts to tell us what is happening behind the scenes about how drugs are being used. Better research and regulation on how drugs are actually being used in the market (and what kinds of effects they have) are needed.

In Canada, a group of academics and health policymakers have been trying for several years to make the case that Canada needed better ways to research and assess the safety and effectiveness of drugs as they are used in the "real world." In mid-January, Canada's new Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq announced that the government was committing \$32 million over four years to create a research network to "enhance national capacity for research on the safety and effectiveness of drugs used by Canadians." This is about the best news on the drug safety front we've seen in a long time.

We shouldn't have to rely on the courts to provide independent, unbiased evidence to help answer important questions about the drugs we take every day. Publicly funded research that is free from pharmaceutical industry influences will help a lot. The new \$32 million is hardly what you'd call *drastic* action on the drug safety front, seeing as this represents about 1/1,000th of Canada's annual drug bill, but it could be a step in the right direction. There is no doubt that the time has come to start creating systems to ensure safe and effective use of drugs in Canada.

There is no use waiting until the courts have their say.



*Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria. He uncovers the world of cancer screening in a two-part radio documentary, You*

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# The bubble bursts

**EARTHFUTURE** Guy Dauncey

## ENVIRONMENT

What are we to make of the world financial crisis? Some analysts are comparing it to the Crash of 1929, which triggered The Great Depression of the 1930s. Almost without exception, they assume it to be a bad thing. Pension funds are evaporating into thin air, people are losing their jobs and businesses are failing. If we picture the economy as a speeding vehicle carrying people to growth and prosperity, and the vehicle suddenly goes into a ditch, then, yes, clearly it's a bad thing.

But what if the vehicle was accelerating down a road that led over a cliff? Might we not say, "Wow! That was a close one," and be amazed that fortune should smile on us? The metaphor is not

the fears are probably a scam dreamed up by people who never liked the bubble anyway.

And if the drivers of the bubble are told that they really must stop because they are chewing up so much of Nature that if everyone lived the way people do in Vancouver, we would need three more entire planets to support us, would that cause the bubble to pause, and stop? No, for the bubble is guided by its own internal messages of growth, profit and gain and all other messages are simply programmed out.

When this bubble crashes, should we not then give thanks for the blessings of a

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**This crash... gives us a chance to step out of the bubble and turn in a new direction towards ecological sustainability so that Nature is never again left out of the picture.**

.....

far-fetched, for our economy *is* rushing to disaster of an ecological kind – and when Nature's ecosystems collapse, we all collapse.

Our economy is a bundle of activities through which we take Nature's resources, add intelligence and use them to add comfort and pleasure to our lives. It is like a bubble that sucks in the real world of trees, fish, animals, plants, minerals, fossil fuels, land, water and topsoil and rolls on regardless, without accounting for what it leaves behind. The bubble can roll right over a beautiful ancient forest and grow fat on its fibre, declaring it "a good thing" in its annual accounts.

If the trees do not speak or explain their value in terms the bubble can understand, it is as if they have no existence. Humans who love the trees for what they are may organize to protect them, and sometimes they may win, causing parks and wilderness areas to be created, but apart from that the bubble rolls on consuming everything it touches.

And if the bubble discovers an amazing source of energy called fossil fuels, which allows it to move faster and more furiously, is this not a good thing? And if a group of people begins warning that fossil fuels leave a dangerous residue in the sky that traps the sun's heat and if this is allowed to continue that all human existence will grind to a halt, will this not cause the drivers of the bubble to ask if they should stop? No – for they prefer voices that tell them not to worry, that

fortunate accident? The mortgage funds tumble over the derivatives and hedge funds and the bubble's financial hyperdrive lands on its knees while the regulators, who were supposed to prevent such a crash, were reciting their mantras in the "Temple of Economic Growth," chanting, "Do not regulate. Let the market decide. The market knows best."

This crash, then, while it is cruel and troubling for individuals and their families, may be the best thing that could have happened to our civilization. It gives us a chance to step out of the bubble and turn in a new direction towards ecological sustainability, to change the economy's ruling principles so that Nature is never again left out of the picture.

It gives us a chance to invest the billions that will flow in economic stimulus packages in measures that will unhook our dependency on fossil fuels; make our homes and buildings more efficient; develop transit, high-speed trains, cycle routes and renewable energy; and restore our forests, grasslands and farmlands. It gives us a chance to breathe and move towards a different future.

*Guy Dauncey is the author of nine books, including After the Crash: The Emergence of the Rainbow Economy. He is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association.*  
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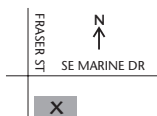


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# All hands on deck

**SCIENCE MATTERS** David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

Well, 2008 was a wild ride. A global economic crisis, elections here and in the US, turmoil in parliament and a worsening environmental situation – it's enough to make you want to climb under the blankets and hope for the best. And there are some hopeful signs. But hope, unfortunately, is not enough. It's going to take a concerted effort on everyone's part to overcome the looming crises the world is facing.

Let's look at the bright side, though. The US is swearing in a president who takes global warming seriously and who is listening to the scientists and other experts who tell us that the situation is outpacing our efforts to confront it. "The time for denial is over," Barack Obama

and bust cycles; a climate-stressed world and a collapse of fish stocks and fertile soils..."

Whether or not these initiatives and proposed emissions-reduction targets will be enough to avert catastrophe after years of stalling by governments, including George Bush's outgoing administration and our own government, remains to be seen. Unfortunately, Canada still seems to be beating around the "Bush."

We earned the dubious honour of winning the Colossal Fossil award (as well as 10 daily fossil awards) at the climate change talks in Poland for doing more than any other country to impede progress. Canada also ranked second-last out of 57 countries on the international 2009

**We earned the dubious honour of winning the Colossal Fossil award...for doing more than any other country to impede progress.**

said in December. "We all believe what the scientists have been telling us for years now, that this is a matter of urgency and national security and it has to be dealt with in a serious way. That is what I intend my administration to do."

The president-elect also recognizes that creating green jobs in areas such as renewable energy is a good way to stimulate and rebuild the economy, perhaps even replacing some of the jobs lost in the auto industry.

Globally, although the UN climate change talks in Poland [in December] yielded no breakthroughs in laying the groundwork for a strong global agreement in Copenhagen this coming December, some progress was made, especially in areas such as reducing deforestation to reduce carbon emissions.

Also on the global front, the United Nations Environment Programme and leading economists have called for a progressive "Green New Deal." The UN Green Economy Initiative is aimed at giving nations the tools to shift to green economies through measures such as creating employment in renewable-energy technologies, ensuring that the value of natural services is included in economic accounting and encouraging sustainable urban planning.

"Transformative ideas need to be discussed and transformative decisions taken," said Achim Steiner, UN under-secretary general and UNEP executive director. "The alternative is more boom

Climate Change Performance Index.

We could certainly use more far-sighted and imaginative leadership. But we can't depend on the politicians – or on those business people who care more about short-term profits than long-term survival. We must remember that they are there to serve us and that if we speak loudly enough they will listen.

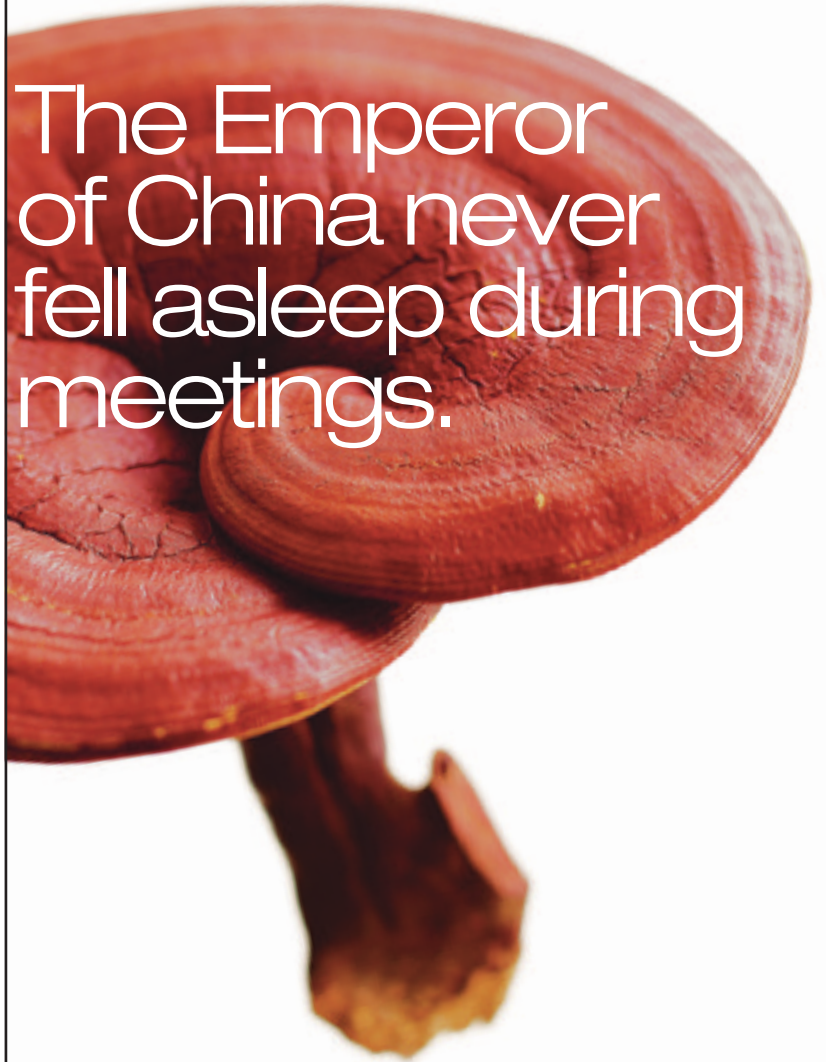
We must also take responsibility in our own lives. A Statistics Canada report notes that individual Canadians are responsible for almost half the greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere, through our vehicle and electricity use and the choices we make in the products we buy.

Rather than making us feel guilty, the report should show us how much power we have as individuals to make a difference through personal choices and small steps. Another Statistics Canada study showed that Canadians are making efforts to recycle, compost, switch to environmentally friendly electrical and plumbing products and vehicles, and more.

We can't wait for politicians to save the world, but we do have to hold them to account. And we must all get informed and involved. If we act now, we – and our children and grandchildren – can hope to lead fulfilling and prosperous lives rather than moving from crisis to crisis. But the window of opportunity is closing a bit more every day.

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# the MAGIC of music

by Geoff Olson

## A surgeon struck by lightning and a dancing parrot hold clues to music's profound effects

Film producer Mark Johnson was on his way to work one day when he heard two monks playing music in a New York subway. One played a nylon guitar and the other was singing in a language the producer didn't understand. In a recent PBS interview with Bill Moyers, Johnson recalled that a few hundred people had gathered around, spellbound by these robed figures. He said he was struck how all of these strangers, all travelling their separate ways, had been brought together by music.

Some time later, Johnson was walking in the streets of Santa Monica when he heard a musician playing a song on the street. He was so moved by his performance that he approached the singer, Roger Ridley, and asked if he could return with some recording equipment and some cameras. He told Roger that he would love to take this song around the world and add other musicians to it.

Johnson says he isn't sure if he chose Ben E. King's classic ballad, *Stand By Me*, or if it chose him. Travelling around the world with Ridley's bare-bones vocal performance of the song, he enlisted others to contribute, from blues singers in post-Katrina New Orleans, to a South African choir, to a Moscow chamber group. Adding their multiple layers of instruments and vocals, Johnson built the voice of one unknown street musician into a poly-rhythmic hymn of shared humanity. Johnson's 10-year musical adventure is portrayed in his documentary *Playing for Change: Peace Through Music*.

The universal language of *Homo sapiens* was, is, and forever will be, music. As a species, we are moved both emotionally and physically by the sounds we make. Somehow, pressure waves in the air, no more substantial than the flutter of a hummingbird's wings, can elicit anything from tears to tapping feet. The word "enchantment," derived from the Latin *incantare*, means to chant or sing a spell. This archaic word connects beauty and the supernatural with song — the earliest and most persistent form of magic.

In his book, *This Is Your Brain on Music* (2006), cognitive psychologist and record producer Daniel J. Levitin alludes to a kind of Sardinian cappella music, in which if the four male voices are perfectly balanced, a fifth female voice is conjured in the listener's mind. The Sardinians explain this voice as the Virgin Mary. And while there are other secular explanations available for this phenomenon, should we be concerned that analyzing music scientifically may detract from the aesthetic appreciation of it? The Ancient Greeks didn't think so. Pythagoras and his followers drew no great distinction between science and art, or between music and mathematics. They believed the mathematical regularity of chord sequences

was a key to the structure of the universe itself: a "music of the spheres," in which harmony united everything from planetary movements to birdsong.

Modern-day scientists, however, aren't much more definitive than the Pythagoreans when it comes to understanding music and the mind. "The thrills, chills and tears we experience from listening to music are the result of having our expectations artfully manipulated by a skilled composer and the musicians who interpret that music," writes Daniel Levitin. But this is trivially true, offering no real explanation for how emotions can be conjured by a sequence of notes. The nineteenth century composer Mendelssohn was a bit more helpful with his claim that music has "not thoughts that are too vague to be put into words, but too precise."

Aldous Huxley echoed the composer's ideas about music. In the early 1930s, the British writer was on holiday in the Mediterranean. On a moonless June night "alive with stars," he groped about in his dark guesthouse for a record to play. He put on the introduction to Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, the *Benedictus*. Later, in his book *Music at Night*, Huxley wrote the following: "The *Benedictus*. Blessed and blessing, his music is in some sort the equivalent of the night, of the deep and living darkness, into which, now in a single jet, now in a fine interweaving of melodies, now in pulsing and almost solid clots of harmonious sound, it pours itself... like time, like the rising and falling trajectories of a life."

What was Beethoven trying to say in the symphonic language of the *Benedictus*? Huxley felt it was the composer's idea of "a certain blessedness lying at the heart of things." This was something Beethoven could only communicate nonverbally, through composition.

Describing any kind of music is like trying to describe a watercolour to a blind man. As the playwright Tom Stoppard once said of music critics, "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture." Not surprisingly, with something so fugitive in meaning, but so personally meaningful, scientists have had difficulty in explaining the origins of music. Finding an "evolutionary purpose" for musical

talent remains a guessing game.

The granddaddy of evolutionary thought, Charles Darwin, thought that music was a kind of showing off to the opposite sex, the auditory equivalent of a peacock's tail. Echoing Darwin, Levitin argues that music is something that male humans developed as a way to demonstrate reproductive fitness. (Rock n' roll, anyone?) To Harvard psychology professor Steven Pinker, music is "auditory cheesecake," the by-product of our species' freakishly large brains. Just as algebra or chess were never survival skills sharpened by natural selection, music is a complex human faculty that exercises other more functional faculties. We do it because it's fun — and it's fun because it builds neural pathways that are shared with more survival-based skills, like rhythmic movement. But it's still an accidental gift.

Ian Cross, director of the Cambridge faculty's Centre for Music and Science, rejects Pinker's explanation as reductionistic and wrong. In an interview for *The Guardian's* "Science Weekly" podcast, Cross points out that we don't merely engage with music solely by listening, but that it's also "active and interactive, and something you do, that is embedded in complex, active behaviours."

Karaoke, raves and Baptist church choirs are all about music as total involvement. In many non-western cultures, there is little distinction between music and dance. For Cross, the evolutionary purpose of music is communal; it fosters social cohesion as a replacement for grooming, a social activity enjoyed by primates.

"Music seems to be extremely good, extremely useful for managing situations of social uncertainty," says Cross, "and it's evolutionarily functional in promoting and sustaining a capacity for sociality."

It shouldn't be surprising that we share an enjoyment of music with other social animals. This is where Snowball the parrot comes in. If you haven't seen him in





action yet, check out this white cockatoo's performances on YouTube, where he bops along to his favourite songs, *Everybody (Backstreet's Back)* by Backstreet Boys and Stevie Nicks' *Edge of Seventeen*. On the latter song, the screeching Snowball shakes his head back and forth, kicks his legs out, and at one point, appears to tap one claw on the downbeat.

Aniruddh Patel, a senior fellow at the Neurosciences Institute in California, received a link to Snowball from a friend and decided to test if the cockatoo was really dancing. He got in touch with Snowball's owner, Irena Shulz, asking if she would help him study the parrot. Patel sent her CDs of the bird's favourite Backstreet Boys track at different tempos and had her videotape his routines. He then graphed Snowball's moments against the varying beats. Patel discovered that the frequent moments that Snowball locked onto the beat weren't by chance. They demonstrated sensitivity to rhythm and an ability to synchronize to it.

Snowball's paradigm-busting performances appear to hinge on those skill sets shared by parrots and human beings alike: vocal learning and imitation. Like us, parrots are highly social animals with brains wired to inter-

he doesn't know any, but he still summons one up when he is at the piano. By way of explanation, Sacks suggests that musical recall is not quite like another kind of memory: "Remembering music is not, in the usual sense, remembering at all... Listening to it, or playing it, is entirely in the present."

In his most recent book, *Musicophilia*, Sacks notes the well-known health benefits of music, for both the healthy and the sick. It is a remarkable thing that, even in the worst cases of dementia, "there is still a self to be called upon, even if music, and only music, can do the calling."

Sometimes, music acts like a force or a personality, in and of itself. In his book, Sacks profiles 42-year-old Tony Cicoria, a surgeon who was hit by lightning. While Cicoria was resuscitated and made a full recovery, this rock music fan was subsequently seized with an unaccountable and newfound interest in classical piano music. He sought out CDs and then a piano, teaching himself to play. Within three months, his mind was overwhelmed with music that seemed to come out of nowhere. Ten years after his electrifying encounter, Cicoria is still as obsessed with classical music, but uninterested in using the new brain-scanning technologies to understand his condition. He insists it is a "lucky strike" and that the music in his head is "a blessing ... not to be questioned."

The link between music and emotions is difficult to quantify. Neurologist Manfred Clynes is one of the very few scientists to have studied the "touching" aspects of music. In addition to having more than 40 patents credited to his name, the Vienna-born neurologist is also a concert pianist who has recorded superb versions

**The universal language of Homo sapiens was, is, and forever will be, music. As a species, we are moved both emotionally and physically by the sounds we make. Somehow, pressure waves in the air, no more substantial than the flutter of a hummingbird's wings, can elicit anything from tears to tapping feet.**

pret sounds and coordinate the complex movements of vocal organs to reproduce them. Perhaps we have more in common with the avian world than we think. In Kerala, India, the chants of Brahmin priests mystify experts. They bear no resemblance to any known language or music, but rather to patterns found only in bird song. Some believe these chants are part of an oral tradition that may pre-date language, going back beyond the first Indo-European peoples.

Whatever our evolutionary or neurological fellowship with birdbrains, it's impossible to witness Snowball's YouTube performances without recognizing his sheer joy. He's obviously enchanted with the music and his own dancing. Similarly, human performers and their audience can fuse into one body of rhythmic celebration, as anyone knows who's been to a particularly memorable rock concert or rave. Music can capture the attention in an "eternal present" that is comparable to sexual ecstasy or mystical states.

This timeless dimension of music was poignantly reflected in *Prisoner of Consciousness*, a BBC documentary about a brain-damaged musicologist studied by neurologist Oliver Sacks. The patient, Clive Wearing, was stricken with a severe brain inflammation that left him with a memory span of only a few seconds. Without a recognizable past, and unable to imagine a future, Wearing once told his wife his purgatorial life was "like 'being dead.'" Although he can never remember her, each time he sees her he is thrilled.

Asked to play a Bach prelude, Wearing initially says

of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*.

In a bizarre series of experiments, the inventive Clynes asked subjects to apply finger pressure on a button to express emotions. The subjects consistently displayed the same gradients of force for different emotions. Anger, for example, is a short, sharp stab on the button. Joy is a soft pressure with a quick release. When Clynes plotted out these gradients and played them back electronically, the results were astounding. The simple tones "sounded" joyous, angry or grieving.

Clynes then tried the same experiment in reverse. Subjects were taught the different pressure gestures corresponding to emotional states, without being told what they meant. Most were able to correctly match them later with their corresponding emotional states. In one of Clynes' experiments, aborigines in Central Australia were able to correctly identify the specific emotional quality of sounds derived from the touch of white, urban Americans. A Wikipedia article about Clynes suggests he has hit upon music's Rosetta Stone, discovering the "biologically fixed, universal, primary dynamic forms that determine expressions of emotion that give rise to much of the experience within human societies."

Clynes' musical research is revolutionary and Sacks' medical prose lyrical, but other scientific literature on music and the mind seems to fall short. I'm left with the impression of a group of blind men in white coats, feeling an elephant with their hands, each giving a tactile report on a different body part – tail, ears and legs – but never getting a fix on the complete beast. There is "explaining"

and then there is "explaining away."

In his study of college singers at the University of California, psychologist Robert Beck found that singing boosts compounds that create a sense of happiness and well being. Singing produces immunoglobulin A, a hormone that counters the stress hormone cortisol. But since every mood appears to have an associated neurochemical, and everyone knows music makes us feel good, is this any more than a peer-reviewed tautology? To give another example, do any of us seriously think our understanding of "love" is fully contained by the description of it as "endogenous production of endorphins?"

The problem comes down to two separate domains: language and music. Although they are connected through song, there is still a divide, according to Aldous Huxley. "Music *says* things about the world, but in specifically musical terms. Any attempt to reproduce these musical statements *in our own words* is necessarily doomed to failure. We cannot isolate the truth contained in a piece of music, for it is a beauty-truth and inseparable from its partner. Only music, and only Beethoven's music, and only this particular music of Beethoven, can tell us with any precision what Beethoven's conception of the blessedness at the heart of things actually was."

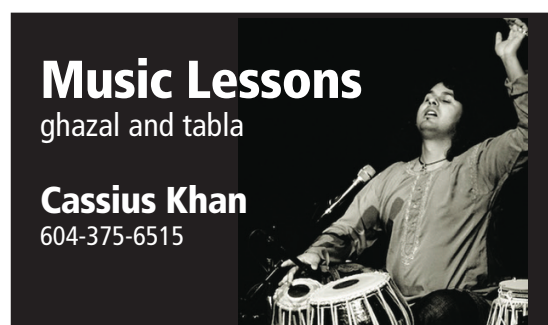
Philosopher Alan Watts insisted that music refers to nothing other than itself. He believed that music is so engaging and powerful precisely because life, and the cosmos it's embedded in, is a dynamical pattern of wave-forms – exactly what music is. In *The Tao of Philosophy*, Watts notes that the point of a musical composition isn't the finish, as in a footrace or the solution to an equation. If it were, he says, "People would go to the concert just to hear one crashing chord." The same applies to dancing. "You don't aim at a particular spot in the room where you should arrive. The whole point of dancing is the dance."

Yet, early in life, we are tricked into the belief that life is a race, Watts says, with a string of goodies strung along from primary school to the world of adult employment, benchmarks for status and success. This process can end with the struggling wage slave "in some racket... selling insurance." We may finally reach a place of social standing and economic security, but we feel vaguely cheated. And we were.

According to Watts, "We have simply cheated ourselves the whole way down the line. We thought of life by analogy – as a journey or pilgrimage – which had a serious purpose at the end. And the thing was, to get to that end, success, or whatever it is, or maybe heaven after you're dead. But we missed the whole point all the way along. It was a musical thing, and you were supposed to sing... or to dance while the music was being played."

If he could put it into words, Snowball the parrot would surely agree with Watts, Huxley and Mendelssohn. Music isn't so much a problem to be solved as a mystery to be lived.

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# Five-year food security plan

ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot

I spent a full year searching for a property where I could grow as much of my own food as possible. From the moment I stepped foot on the land we bought, I started visualizing my new garden 10 years down the road. Amazingly, it only took five years to achieve year-round self-sufficiency in fruits and vegetables. Now I know that urban gardeners on Vancouver Island could achieve food security with their own five-year plan. It could look something like this:

Year one: edible landscaping. Year two: fruit and vegetable gardening. Year three: winter food gardening. Year four: seed saving for future harvests. Year five: four-season production using local seed banks.

We are beginning the ninth year on our property so I thought I'd share what we did on *The Garden Path* with you:

Designing the garden: Maverick Excavating dug up a 50 sq. ft. area, which was divided into four quadrants with a circular bed in the middle. This layout works well for crop rotations, which break the lifecycle of pests and diseases.

We grow food year round in the main garden because in our temperate climate there's no need to leave beds empty from October to April; there are 50 varieties of different vegetables that can be harvested throughout winter.

The "Berry Walk": I planted a 50-foot-long border with raspberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants, gooseberries and Josta berries, all of which were under-planted with "Totem" June-bearing strawberries. They thrive in the same conditions.

The fruit orchard: A small orchard of 10 trees was planted in the second year. Dwarf and semi-dwarf saplings of apple,

**We grow food year round in the main garden because in our temperate climate there's no need to leave beds empty from October to April.**

Amending the soil: With 15 feet of clay fill to work with, this was a no-brainer! How to change a cracked substrate with no earthworms into a fertile organic loam in a few months? First, Maverick Excavating came to break up the clay and then we mulched like mad, with what I refer to as "The Four Secrets of Successful Soil Building" – compost, manure, leaves and seaweed. By adding six-inch layers of these organic amendments in the fall, we were able to turn compacted clay into friable soil, with good tilth and teaming with earthworms by April the following year.

The best part is these organic soil amendments are free and freely available and are often regarded as waste. If urban gardeners linked with rural farmers and used their manure, we could easily solve a big waste disposal problem. If gardeners kept their leaves and fed them back to the soil, we would save a lot of money by the city not having to pick them up and we wouldn't have to drive to the works yard to buy the leaves back as mulch. There's a good joke here.

Building a greenhouse: I chose a glass and metal frame model, but there are other options. Due to erratic weather, I now grow seedlings for transplanting whenever possible. If you don't have the luxury of a greenhouse, you can improvise with cold frames and cloches.

pear, cherry and plum trees were planted 15-feet apart in two rows of five because I visualized an avenue of trees with a canopy of fruit, providing shade for summer banquets.

The arbour: In year three, we scoured the forest to build a 50-foot-long arbour for kiwis, grapes, climbing berries and thornless blackberries. The berries are very ornamental as they ripen from red to black.

Seed saving: Over the years, more garden beds were added for seed saving. Plants adapt to the conditions in which they grow, which is why using organic seed is best when you are an organic gardener. Local seeds also have an edge in that they become adapted to the local climate conditions.

Willows and bamboos: These are useful, renewable resources for the garden. In future years, the bamboos and willows I have been planting will provide material for obelisks, arbours, trellises, screens, fences and teepees.

The native edible plant walk: next on the list – I'll keep you posted.

Carolyn Herriot is author of *A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide*. She grows her certified organic "Seeds of Victoria" at The Garden Path Centre where she blogs *The New Victory Garden* online.

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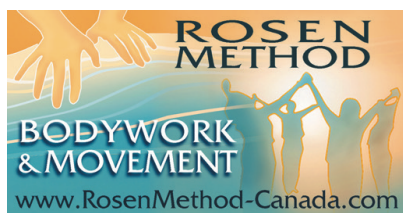
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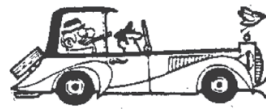
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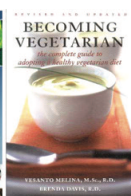
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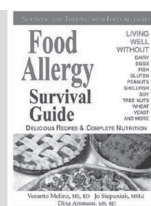
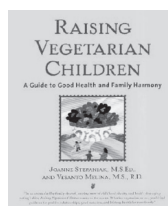
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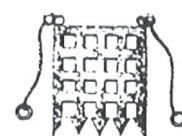
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~ **Sant Rajinder Singh** is a spiritual Master in the Sant Mat tradition. He enables others to experience the divine Light and Sound of God inherent within.

**RICHMOND: Sundays 10 am-12 noon**  
**Science of Spirituality Eco-Centre**  
 11011 Shell Rd (at Steveston Hwy)  
 Judy: 604-530-0589

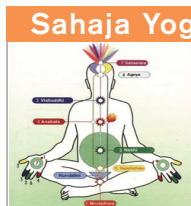

**VANCOUVER: 2nd & 4th Wednesdays**  
**Feb. 11, 25; Mar. 11, 25; 7-9:30 pm**  
 Linda: 604-985-5840

**VICTORIA: Sundays, 10 am-12 noon**  
**Fairfield Community Place**  
 1330 Fairfield Rd.  
 John: 250-480-5119

[www.sos.org](http://www.sos.org)

~~All are welcome. All programs are FREE~~

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~ H. H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

Are you a seeker? Have you been searching for that subtle source of peace & contentment within? Do you want to lead a happy & balanced lifestyle? If so, please join our **FREE** Ongoing Meditation Classes in BC and Ontario. Various BC classes are held in **Vancouver and Burnaby** info: 604-726-8149, 604-715-8888 **New Westminster** - info: 604-524-9371

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[www.freemeditation.ca](http://www.freemeditation.ca)

For classes in **Greater Toronto Area** please call 1-866-850-YOGA or visit [www.sahajayoga.ca](http://www.sahajayoga.ca)



**Self-Realization Fellowship**

*"The more you feel peace in meditation, the closer you are to God."*  
 - Paramahansa Yogananda

We all share a desire for love, happiness, and inner freedom. Paramahansa Yogananda, author of Autobiography of a Yogi, came to the West to spread the Kriya Yoga meditation technique, which fulfills these desires through scientific God-communion. Self-Realization Fellowship groups practice

scientific methods of yoga meditation for awakening direct personal experience of God. These techniques enable you to more easily attune your consciousness with the divine consciousness, and thus rediscover your soul qualities of peace, harmony, and lasting happiness. All are welcome.

**Vancouver Meditation Group**  
 171 West 6th Ave ph: 604.250.4050  
[www.vancouvermeditationgroup.org](http://www.vancouvermeditationgroup.org)  
**Victoria Meditation Group**  
 202-2504 Government St. ph: 250.588.3235  
[info@victoriameditationgroup.org](mailto:info@victoriameditationgroup.org)  
[www.victoriameditationgroup.org](http://www.victoriameditationgroup.org)



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 Contact:  
 Karen or Linda  
**604-258-0031**

Program subject to change without notice. Right of Admission Reserved

**Aquarian Foundation teachings will revitalize your philosophy** about life on planet Earth and life hereafter. Come find out about "Tomorrow's Religion Here Today." God calls you now! **Worship Services: Sunday 11 AM** - Spiritual readings available. **Wednesday 8 PM** - Spiritual Healing Service.

# Latest Palme winner a class act

**FILMS WORTH WATCHING** Robert Alstead

*enheit 9/11* (2004) with its entertaining invective and the aching, angst-ridden existentialism of the Dardenne brothers, two-time winners with *Rosetta* (1999) and *L'Enfant* (2005).

While *The Class* falls more into the latter category, it has a straightforward, lighter touch than other moody works of the Belgian auteurs. Considering the potential for tragedy and strife in its study of a class of 13-15-year-olds

from deprived, multicultural Paris, it's surprisingly lively with its verbal sparring matches between the teacher and his troublesome pupils.

All the action takes place within the school and mostly within the classroom itself. Although it's a fictional piece, there's a documentary realism to it; think handheld, fly-on-the-wall shots and a flood of dialogue. You would be forgiven for initially thinking that you are following a slick TV crew on an assignment rather than watching a work of fiction.

The film was loosely scripted, with students improvising dialogue. Three high-

definition cameras captured the action and you'd never guess from the quality of the performances that the 24 teen actors were drawn from a tiny pool of 50 students from inner-city Parisian schools.

The narrative structure is necessarily loose - a teacher arrives and starts teaching - but it draws you in and then hooks you with a dramatic plot twist towards the end. François pushes, goads, encourages and teases his students and allows them to dish it back. This works most of the time and even his most difficult students, like the surly Malian Souleymane, start responding to his approach. As long as he can maintain the delicate balancing act of disciplined decorousness with free-flowing interaction, he appears to get results, stimulating discussion and interaction.

But it's never easy and as external strains begin to take their toll, his methods are questioned in the staff common room. Ultimately, he crosses a line that undermines his authority with his students. Unlike some more gooey films of this genre, the story remains credible to the end, but it is the subtle changes in the way power is wielded between the four walls that makes this such an interesting film.

Also out this month is Steven Soder-

bergh's two-part biopic *Che* (30), starring Benicio del Toro as iconic Ernesto "Che" Guevara. In part one, *The Argentine*, he sets sail for Cuba in 1956 with Fidel Castro and 80 rebels to overthrow the corrupt dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The film follows Che's rise from doctor to commander to revolutionary hero.

Part 2, *Guerilla*, starts at the height of Che's fame following the Cuban Revolution. He emerges incognito in Bolivia leading a small group of Cuban comrades and Bolivian recruits in the great Latin American Revolution. However, for all the will in the world, his campaign is doomed. The almost five-hour-long film has been praised for Benicio del Toro's performance, although critics are still arguing over whether Soderbergh's portrait of Che is too dispassionate and uncritical.

Finally, the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival will show a string of movies and multimedia presentations on the theme of climbing and outdoor pursuits (February 20-28) at the Centennial Theatre in Lonsdale and Pacific Cinematheque. Details at [www.vimff.org](http://www.vimff.org)

*Robert Alstead blogs at*  
[www.2020Vancouver.com](http://www.2020Vancouver.com)



A scene from *The Class*.

Opening this month, Laurent Cantet's French language feature *The Class* (*Entre Les Murs*) won the Palme d'Or, the top prize, at the Cannes Film Festival this past summer. The film is based on teacher François Bégaudeau's 2006 novel about his experiences at a junior high school in a tough Paris neighbourhood and stars the author himself as maverick French-language teacher François Marin.

Palme d'Or winners typically have a strong socio-political commentary, although treatments vary widely, including Michael Moore's documentary *Fahr-*





# The face of future media

INDEPENDENT MEDIA Steve Anderson

CULTURE

On February 17, hearings that could well decide the future of Internet broadcasting in Canada will begin in a small room in Gatineau, Quebec. There, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) will decide whether or not to roll back its 1999 decision to exempt Internet content from regulation.

Some of the questions the CRTC will consider include: What is “new media” (read Internet) broadcasting? What might its impact be on the Canadian broadcasting system? Which regulatory measures and/or incentives are needed to boost Canadian broadcast programming on the Internet? The answers to these questions could well shape the future of Canadian broadcasting both on and offline.

## A definition for the future of media

Defining exactly what comprises “new media broadcasting” will be tricky. The new media broadcasting definition could have huge implications for online, independent media in Canada. For example, many of the independent outlets that publish this column could have access to an independent “Internet Broadcast Fund” if the CRTC provides a relatively flexible definition.

The definition of new media broadcasting will also have broader implications for Canadian content production. The definition should prevent conventional broadcasters from bypassing their

current obligations when using the Internet to distribute videos. However, licensing new media producers and mandating that they follow Canadian content rules is a step too far. Such a heavy handed approach would stifle online innovation and user generated content production.

## Canadian production under threat

Canadians generally watch American TV programs and Canadian programs are, in large part, financed through the advertising revenue and subscription fees viewers pay to watch those programs. If people gain direct access to those American programs, outside of the regulatory systems designed to put some of that revenue back into the production of Canadian programs, the result could be a disaster for Canadian program production.

It’s not that Canadian producers make programs nobody wants to watch. On the contrary, audiences for Canadian programs are currently at an all time high and growing. It’s simply that American programs generally pay for themselves in their home markets and, thereby, are sold at huge discounts to Canadian broadcasters. As heavily advertised and marketed American programs flood Canadian markets, it becomes increasingly difficult for Canadian programs to attract audiences and generate revenue.

Because American programs enjoy such an economic advantage in Canadian markets, broadcast regulation is

designed to ensure that Canadian programs have space in the schedule and that there is money to pay for them. But as more and more foreign – mainly American broadcast programs – are available over the Internet, this delicate balance could be lost. Big broadcasters have the privilege of using the public airwaves and enjoy access to public support mechanisms. Imposing a limit on

be applied exclusively to the large carriers (Bell, Telus, Rogers, Shaw and Videotron). Independent ISPs that purchase wholesale bandwidth from the major carriers should be exempt so as to avoid eroding their market share and to further encourage competition and investment in the Internet service market.

Ensuring that regulation will encourage both innovation and a Canadian

**It’s not that Canadian producers make programs nobody wants to watch. Audiences for Canadian programs are currently at an all time high and growing.**

repurposed American content should be the minimum requirement.

American programs enjoy the same economic advantages on the Internet as they do in cable and satellite markets, and, as such, production funds like those available for these traditional markets will be necessary. But where, exactly, will the money come from?

One likely source of funding is the windfall profit from telecommunications carriers. Just as the companies that distribute broadcast programs now pay into a production fund, the telecommunications carriers that provide access to the Internet might also be expected to contribute to a fund through a telecom levy.

To be clear, the telecom levy would

presence on the Internet should be the priority for the CRTC in these hearings. To that end, the Internet Broadcast Fund should be used as a mechanism to support independent and community media, which are in need of sustainable revenue streams and vital to supporting a democratic culture in Canada.

*Steve Anderson is the national coordinator for the Campaign for Democratic Media. He contributed to Censored 2008 and Battleground: The Media, and has written for The Tyee, Toronto Star, Epoch Times and Adbusters. [steve@democraticmedia.ca](mailto:steve@democraticmedia.ca) [www.FacebookSteve.com](http://www.FacebookSteve.com) [www.SteveOnTwitter.com](http://www.SteveOnTwitter.com)*

...Obama by Jonathan Schell continued from p. 13

has done part of the job, but the mists of illusion still hover over the land. Fantasies of wealth and power, not to speak of superpower, die hard. Happy hour is more pleasant than the morning after. For bubble thinking was projected beyond the deluded institutions

nizations that inform and constitute the mainstream. The credit and debt booms were national, corporate and personal, symptoms of a nation living beyond its means at all levels. The facts of global warming, it is true, were increasingly accepted by the public, but not by the

**All the crises are also the result of excess, not scarcity. Too much credit was packaged in too many ways by people who were too smart, too busy, too greedy.**

to national politics as a whole. The falsehoods that led to war, the fact-averse ideology that inspired the bid for empire, the investments based on fictitious ratings and the denial of the evidence of global warming – none of these grew in a vacuum. They were supported or tolerated or insufficiently discredited by the media and other orga-

president it put in office, and there was little appetite for measures, like a gas tax, to cut back carbon emissions. As global warming intensified, the iconic American vehicle of the era was the gas devouring, pseudo-military Hummer, an imperial auto if there ever was one. The grandiose conceptions of American power found a ready audience, as

reflected in election results. They linger still as troops shift, with Obama’s blessing, from the unpopular Iraq quagmire to the better accepted Afghanistan quagmire.

In short, the mainstream, like a river that jumps its bed and ravages the countryside, has overflowed the levees of reality and carried the country to disaster after disaster in every area of national life: military, economic and ecological. These depredations have paradoxically led a groggy public to yearn for the stability that Obama’s centrist cabinet choices seem to promise. But they know – Obama, who denounced the “dead zone that politics had become,” told them in the campaign – that these appointees had a hand in creating the ills they are now charged with addressing.

“Reality” has bifurcated in a manner confusing to politicians and citizens alike. On the one side is political reality, which by definition means centrist, mainstream opinion. On the other side

is the reality of events, heading in quite a different direction. If Obama makes mainstream choices, he is called “pragmatic.” And it may well be so in political terms, as the poll results attest. But political pragmatism in current circumstances may be real folly, as it was on the eve of the Iraq War and in the years of the finance bubble preceding the crash. Smooth sailing down the middle of the Niagara River carries you over Niagara Falls. The danger is not that Obama’s move into the mainstream will offend a tribe called “the left” or his “base,” but that by adjusting to a centre that is out of touch, he will fail to address the crises adequately and will lose his effectiveness as president.

*Jonathan Schell is the author of numerous books, including The Fate of the Earth and The Seventh Decade: The New Shape of Nuclear Danger. He is also a Distinguished Fellow at the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization.*

# Datebook

**The Wellness Show**  
Exhibits, Seminars, Cooking Demos, Prizes  
**February 6 - 8 Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre (Canada Place)**  
Event info: 604-983-2794 [www.thewellnessshow.com](http://www.thewellnessshow.com)



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Use our shea butter products on dry skin, dry hair, itchy scalp, eczema, wrinkles, stretch marks & arthritis. Every purchase helps rural villagers in West Africa, Senegal and Guinea. Available at: Choices Markets, Finlandia, Alive Health Centre's Genesis, Planet Organic, Abantu, Banyan Books, Nature's Prime and many more... [www.africanfairtradesociety.com](http://www.africanfairtradesociety.com)

**DANCE for the Future of Organic Farming**  
**8th Annual Chicken & Egg Dance**  
**Feb 14, 6 - 11pm**  
**Bring Your Valentine!**  
**Capri Hall/Subud Centre**  
3925 Fraser St. @ King Edward  
Advance tickets \$12/adults  
\$6/children under 12 or \$15/\$7.50 door  
**Call Susan 604-857-1400**  
or check [www.organics.bc.ca](http://www.organics.bc.ca)  
for ticket info  
or to make a donation  
for the silent auction

**THE WORK THAT CONNECTS**  
In a time of upheaval, take time to **experience your place in the web of life, learn practices to shift your perceptions and draw on deeper resources for taking action in the world.**  
Jackie Larkin & Maggie Ziegler  
**April 3 - 5**  
2494 Arbutus Rd. Victoria  
Retreat - S \$250, D - \$225, commute \$135  
Early reg. Feb 14  
**250-220-4601 or 250-380-9786**  
[earthliterations@gmail.com](mailto:earthliterations@gmail.com)  
[www.livinglanguageinstitute.org](http://www.livinglanguageinstitute.org)

Annual two-day  
**CLINICAL HYPNOSIS TRAINING WORKSHOP**  
February 14 & 15, 2009  
9am - 5pm  
800 UBC Robson Square  
Vancouver  
Brochure & Registration:  
[www.hypnosis.bc.ca](http://www.hypnosis.bc.ca)  
or call (604) 688-1714  
**The Canadian Society of Clinical Hypnosis (BC Div)**

## JAN 31 - FEB 28

**Zero Allergies** ~ Free Information Seminars  
Burnaby, Kitsilano and West Vancouver. Life changing information for all allergies and health issues. Visit [www.zeroallergies.com](http://www.zeroallergies.com) for times and addresses (604) 635-3900.

## FEB 5

**Dolphin Spirit Events** presents Intuition and Consciousness with Jeannie Martin.  
15320 Columbia Ave. White Rock. 778-887-7331

## FEB 7

**Rammed Earth for beautiful environmental homes** - slideshow presentation. SPEC Building  
2150 Maple Street, Saturday, 2-4 p.m. Free.  
RSVP 250-653-2035 [www.rammedearth.info](http://www.rammedearth.info)

## FEB 7-9

**Silent Retreat:** An opportunity to recharge, re-balance and discover the peace within at the Self Realization Meditation Healing Centre, Sunshine Coast. Personal retreats can also be arranged at any time. [www.selfrealizationcentre.ca](http://www.selfrealizationcentre.ca)  
1-604-740-0898.

## FEB 8

**Raw Food Chef Certification!** Our fundamental course teaches how to go raw and make delicious meals! 2-6pm \$125 Call: 778.839.8424  
[www.rawteacher.com/missjanice](http://www.rawteacher.com/missjanice)

## FEB 9

**Meditation for Planetary Peace** on the Full Moon, Monday, February 9th, at 7:30 PM. 2950 Laurel St, Vancouver. [www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm](http://www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm)

## FEB 9 & 10

**Science of the Soul presents;** a course in Spiritual Living. Open to all. Always free. February 9: Roundhouse Rec centre. Room C. 7-8pm. Feb 10: Richmond at #153-5851 Minoru Blvd. 7-8pm. 1-877-566-9849

## FEB 14

**Blue Lotus Music** two events. 'The Rose Ceremony' transformation, dedication to Love 7:30pm. Donation. Singing Field workshop David Solest rediscover love's secret sound, the naked voice inside you. 10-5 \$85. UCV 949 W. 49th  
[david@bluelotusmusic.com](mailto:david@bluelotusmusic.com) 604-685-0551

**DANCE for the Future of Organic Farming** 8th Annual Chicken & Egg Dance Bring Your Valentine! Capri Hall/Subud Centre. 6 - 11pm 3925 Fraser St. @ King Edward Advance tickets \$12/adults \$6/children under 12 or \$15/\$7.50 door Call Susan 604-857-1400 or check [www.organics.bc.ca](http://www.organics.bc.ca) for ticket info or to make a donation for the silent auction.

**SHAMANIC DRUMMING & DREAMING CIRCLE:**  
Sat, 7-10pm. Insight/healing from your Nature Spirit

Animal Totem guardians. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254, W. 7th. Donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636.  
[www.shamanichealing.info](http://www.shamanichealing.info)

## FEB 15

**IMAGO Connects: All about Relationships** - for Singles and Couples (12:30 - 2:30 pm) with Katie Barr (\$20 per person). Based on Orph's favourite relationship therapist, Dr. Harville Hendrix (author of "Getting the Love You Want"). Get a head start on your next relationship or gain some clarity about the one you're already in. For more info visit [www.hinacoaching.com](http://www.hinacoaching.com) To register call: 604-929-9642 or email: [lori@bodyharmony.ca](mailto:lori@bodyharmony.ca)

## FEB 18

**Uncover the Past-Heal the Present.** Interactive evening about past lives, karmas for understanding of your current life. Ferry Building Gallery, 1414 Argyle Ave. West Van. \$12 Registration. 604-925-7290

## FEB 21-22

**Raw Food Instructor Certification!** Extensive gourmet meals, sprouting, dehydrating, coaching. Opportunity to teach and have own website. 11am-7pm \$650 Prerequisite: Raw Food Chef Certification (Feb 8) [www.rawteacher.com/missjanice](http://www.rawteacher.com/missjanice) Call: 778.839.8424

**Pain Management Workshop** for NLP and Hypnosis Practitioners.  
[www.dolphinspiritiveworkshops.com](http://www.dolphinspiritiveworkshops.com) or 778-238-2427

## FEB 25

**PeerNetBC's Workshop:** Organizing Peer Support Groups - The Nuts & Bolts. 5:30 - 8:30 PM, \$50, [www.peernetbc.com](http://www.peernetbc.com) 604-733-6186

## FEB 27

**Introduction to Reflexology** commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7.30 pm \$10, Course \$325. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818 [www.pacificreflexology.com](http://www.pacificreflexology.com)

## MAR 6

**The Secret History of Dreaming:** Author, dream shaman and history scholar Robert Moss. Vancouver Public Library, Main Branch, 7:00 pm. Free lecture and book-signing.

## MAR 6-8

**Basic ThetaHealing Certification Workshop,** Loretta Mohl. Information: [www.CanadianCollegeofHealingArts.com](http://www.CanadianCollegeofHealingArts.com) Call: 780-910-5052

## MAR 7-8

**SPRING LIVING FAIR & FASHION SHOW** - Celebrate ethical living and support over 50 local eco-businesses at this 2nd annual free community event. March 7, 10am-6pm, eco-product & service fair. March 8, 10am-4pm, eco-fashion show and market. Heritage Hall (3102 Main St.). [www.springlivingfair.ca](http://www.springlivingfair.ca)

## MAR 13-15

**Healing Power Of Angels**, Best Western, 1755 Davie St. Experience the healing power of the Seven Archangels. 7pm Fri. eve. - \$20 604-591-6095  
[info@HealingPowerofAngels.org](mailto:info@HealingPowerofAngels.org)  
[www.HealingPowerofAngels.org](http://www.HealingPowerofAngels.org)

## MAR 14-16

**Silent Retreat:** An opportunity to recharge, re-balance and discover the peace within at the Self Realization Meditation Healing Centre, Sunshine Coast. [www.selfrealizationcentre.ca](http://www.selfrealizationcentre.ca) 1-604-740-0898.

## MAR 23-25

**PeerNetBC's Workshop Series:** Communication Skills (23rd), Problem-solving & Decision-making (24th), Group Development (25th), Power & Diversity (26th), \$50 per workshop, 5:30 - 8:30 PM, [www.peernetbc.com](http://www.peernetbc.com)

## MAR 25 & 27

**Mother Meera's first visit to Vancouver** and Kamloops/Kelowna Darshan (Blessing) is Mother Meera's silent bestowal of Grace and Light through her gaze and touch. There is no charge for Darshan. It is her gift to humanity. Register on the website below: <http://mothermeeradarshanvancouver.com> or <http://mothermeeradarshankamloops.com>

## APR 1 - 29

**LEARN ENERGY MEDICINE & PSYCHOLOGY TOOLS TO HEAL YOUR MIND - BODY - SPIRIT!**  
Workshop: Wednesdays 7-9pm, \$199 (Limited Seating) 604-990-1584 [www.EhrlichAndAssociates.com](http://www.EhrlichAndAssociates.com)

## APR 4

**Firewalking. An ancient technique** for personal transformation. 6:30-10:30pm, Sunshine BC. \$150 [neva@thespiralriver.com](mailto:neva@thespiralriver.com), [www.thespiralriver.com](http://www.thespiralriver.com)

## SUNDAYS

**A Course in Miracles** ongoing study groups meet every Sunday morning 10:30 am to 12:30 pm (South Burnaby) and Tuesday evening 7:30 to 9:30 pm (North Vancouver), NO CHARGE - donations only. Call Susan @ 604 987-6985 for details and directions.

**Centre for Spiritual Living.** Join us every Sunday @ 11 AM for spiritual teachings and great music at 1495 West 8th Ave, Vancouver. info 604-321-1225 [www.cslvancouver.com](http://www.cslvancouver.com)

**Free, anonymous, telephone support line:** Guided meditations for people suffering from chronic pain. Non-religious. Counselors have community crisis line training. 7-11 PM, 604-936-5683.

**Laughter Club.** Laugh as you have never laughed before and feel refreshed, invigorated, and relaxed. 3-4pm Open Door Yoga Studio, 1111 Commercial Drive Info. [farah@thesmilingyogi.com](mailto:farah@thesmilingyogi.com)

FaerieStar  
School of  
  
Chakra  
Arts&Wizardry  
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**WWW.FAIESTARCHAKRAS.webs.com**

**Pranic Healing**  
*the science and art of subtle energy*  
events  
**Meditation for Planetary Peace**  
Feb 9th, 7:30 PM - St. George's Place  
2950 Laurel St. (at 14th), Vancouver  
**Pranic Healing Clinics in Vancouver**  
St. George's, 2950 Laurel St. (at 14th)  
Tuesdays\*: 11 AM - 2:30 PM & 6 - 9 PM  
The Meditation for Planetary Peace is held at the beginning of each clinic. Last healing begins half-hour before closing. \*Closed last Tuesday of the month.  
**Keep In Touch**  
[www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm](http://www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm)

**Learn to Heal**  
*with Janet Mierau*  
**Certified Pranic Healer**  
classes  
**Basic Pranic Healing**  
Jan 31st - Feb 1st  
Cost: \$350 Text: \$43  
**Pranic Psychotherapy**  
Feb 21st - 22nd  
Cost: \$400 Text: \$43  
**Soul Realization**  
March 7th - 8th  
Cost: \$350 Text: \$43  
Past Life Healings By Appointment  
**Please contact Janet Mierau**  
**at 604.921.6981 or [jmierau@telus.net](mailto:jmierau@telus.net)**



# Classifieds

**SOS (Science of Spirituality):** See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247. All Welcome. [www.sos.org](http://www.sos.org)

**Spiritual Centre for Dynamic Living.** If you enjoy Oprah's Soul Series with leading spiritual teachers, you'll feel at home in our community. Sundays 11am Vancouver Planetarium  
1100 Chestnut St. [www.dynamiccentre.com](http://www.dynamiccentre.com)

## MONDAYS

**Brian Swimme's, Powers of the Universe, DVD's** Victoria 1:00 – 3:00, Jan 12 – Mar 23 \$90 or \$10 drop in 250-220-4601 [earthliteracies@gmail.com](mailto:earthliteracies@gmail.com)  
[www.livinglanguageinstituteofvancouver.org](http://www.livinglanguageinstituteofvancouver.org)

**Dream Workshop,** Mary Jane Wilson MA Mondays, Feb 16 - Mar 16, 10:00 – 12:00, \$90 series or \$25 drop in 250-380.9786 [earthliteracies@gmail.com](mailto:earthliteracies@gmail.com)  
[www.livinglanguageinstituteofvancouver.org](http://www.livinglanguageinstituteofvancouver.org)

## TUESDAYS

**Reflexology Student Clinic** 6 – 10pm One hour sessions \$18. By appointment only. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818  
[www.pacificreflexology.com](http://www.pacificreflexology.com)

## WEDNESDAYS

**Hawaiian Medicine Circle** 7pm Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha, tea and snacks. \$10 donation. At Hale Ola, 1215 Madison Avenue, Burnaby. 604-431-7474 Call Kamu Kaimana

**Season for Non Violence** - powerful and compelling 10 week meditation; drop-in, \$10 min./wk, includes workbook, hosted by the Centre for Spiritual Living, at the Masonic Centre, 1495 W8th Ave. Vancouver, 604-321-1225.

**Earthsong Group Meditation Circle:** 7-8:30pm, Kitsilano. Entry level 8 session commitment. Intro session by donation. Shamanic, Taoist, Vedic. For first-timers not practicing daily meditation. Pre-register 604.418.9636. [www.shamanichealing.info](http://www.shamanichealing.info)

**Free! Powerful Effective Meditation** sessions, as taught at the best Yoga studios in New York and LA! 7-9pm, Life Bliss Tree, #5-111 West Broadway, Vancouver 604-628-4479, [www.LifeBlissCanada.org](http://www.LifeBlissCanada.org)

## FRIDAYS

**"Destiny Dialogues"** Free Talks First Friday of each month, experiential evening that explores the inter-connections between destiny and suffering, relationships, vocations, joy, teachers, character, nature, family, dreams. 7-9pm. 604-317-1613.

**Inter Spiritual Ananda Mantra Choir** Every Friday. Sing with joy, open heart! 7:30. See February 14 for an event/workshop! 2950 Laurel Join anytime. [david@bluelotusmusic.com](mailto:david@bluelotusmusic.com) 604-685-0551

**Just Dance!** Three Fridays a month. Alcohol & smoke-free. 9pm, 2114 W. 4th Ave. @ Arbutus. \$10/5. [www.justdance.ca](http://www.justdance.ca).

## ONGOING

**Events at VanDusen Botanical Garden:** Visit [www.vandusengarden.org](http://www.vandusengarden.org)

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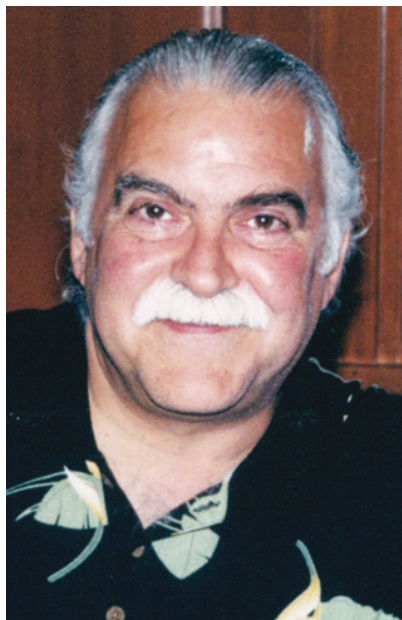
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## Jim Fulton 1950-2008

### This environment advocate and ally will be sorely missed

by Milt Bowling

Pictures in the newspaper could not have prepared me for the bear of a man I met for the first time at the David Suzuki Foundation – Jim Fulton. Jim was one of those people whose gaze let you know you were being appraised as friend or foe in the first few seconds. His handshake and/or hug revealed how you'd fared.

Jim started as a probation officer in the Queen Charlottes and then entered politics, winning three successive elections as the NDP Member of Parliament for Skeena from 1979 to 1993. He then became the first executive director of the world-famous environmental organization, the David Suzuki Foundation. There, he gave selfless assistance to many groups doing their best to help our ailing planet. Ours, the Electromagnetic Radiation Task Force, was one of them, and I've met very few people who are such a quick study on the subject of harmful effects of electromagnetic radiation as Jim.

In 1997, the Vancouver School Board was persuaded that leasing out school roofs to cell phone companies for their microwave transmitters was a good way to raise money. It was an idea I did not agree with, especially because they chose my son's elementary school as a location. After conducting extensive research that uncovered a number of unsettling facts, I organized the community and we successfully opposed the involuntary exposure of 600 children to this radiation. Another phone company then hid their transmitters inside a cross that they donated to the church right next to the school. An appeal to the Board of Variance resulted in the transmitters being taken down, which

I have been told is a first in the world. Soon, other communities were asking for help and the Electromagnetic Radiation (EMR) Task Force of Canada was born.

As anyone who has taken on an environmental issue knows, you can get intense pushback from the affected industry and also from government regulatory agencies that may have been asleep at the wheel. You become "the problem." In looking for supportive allies, I couldn't have found better in Jim, who I met through my first benefactor, wildlife artist Robert Bateman.

Jim picked up on our concerns right away. We were thrilled that he wrote to then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Health Minister Allan Rock in November 1999, demanding that Parliament take our concerns seriously and act upon them. And this was on the Foundation's letterhead! We felt lifted to a new level of credibility. Jim continued to prod the government on our behalf for years.

To offset political pressure that continued to build until 2002, Rock, by then Minister of Industry, announced that a review panel on health effects of cell towers would be set up. Jim immediately fired off a letter stating that our EMR Task Force had more experience on the issue than anyone else in Canada and demanded that we play a key role in the review. Not surprisingly, it took seven months to receive a reply from Rock, which stated that the committee was already set up without our help. Also not surprisingly, their report found no problem with the current setup, which gave the industry *carte blanche* to put their towers wherever they wanted – beside schools, day care centres, hospitals or seniors homes – without community input.

Our work continues around the world for the deployment of safe telecommunications infrastructures using available mitigating technology. We are a lot closer to the implementation of solutions than we were a decade ago, in large part because of the early boost given without hesitation by Jim Fulton. The planet lost a warrior on December 20, 2008 and we all lost a friend.

*Milt Bowling is president of the Clean Energy Foundation and director of the Health Action Network Society. Reach him via [miltbowling@telus.net](mailto:miltbowling@telus.net) or call 604-436-2152.*



## On Track Zodiac

FEBRUARY 2009 Adrien Dilon



**ARIES** (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Self-expression flows within your relationships. If a new love comes your way, all the better, but regardless, you will certainly be making new contacts, breaking bread with friends and socializing like a butterfly amongst the flowers, symbolically speaking, at least.



**TAURUS** (Apr 20 – May 21)

It is time to lay the framework for your ideas of personal success and your intentions to achieve it. Set out to accomplish your goals and discover ways of reaching your intended targets. This is a time for attainment of matters of importance.



**GEMINI** (May 22 – Jun 20)

You usher in a period of growth in many aspects of your personal life, which favours your relationships. You could find that your curiosity ignites with a great deal of mental stimulation, causing you to go beyond your comfort zone and create unexpected results in the financial sector as well.



**CANCER** (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Self-indulgence may play out in luxuriating in the finer things and diving into pleasures that come from engaging with others in social interaction. Your wild side may have a chance to be more creative. Perhaps you dare to be more enterprising in the way you approach love, yet you feel balanced and independent.



**LEO** (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

Bringing trustworthy people into your life will assist you with any challenges ahead. The Leo finds little time for defeat and heads confidently where others would surely run away. Bring your adversaries closer so that you might discover how to conjoin with the forces of nature that serve to heal amongst disorder.



**VIRGO** (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

You could well know exactly what you want and how to get it, as your direction seems clear. You may feel that sacrifice played much too big a part in recent months and it's your turn to reap what you sow. Great potential brings with it certain risk.



**LIBRA** (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

You will need to summon some courage to consort with those you feel undermine or weaken your endeavours to move ahead. You will gain much from your tolerance of others and you'll keep flowing like a cool stream. Let patience take your hand and gently guide you.



**SCORPIO** (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

This is a very energetic few months for you and your effectiveness is indeed seen and felt by others. At times, this could signify challenges and disputes, as increased energy requires an outlet if not channelled in constructive ways. Some tensions are bound to break and build; the cycle continues.



**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

If being sad or lonely is part of the human experience, you know that this too will pass. A little rain must fall, as the seed within needs nourishment and a safe place to develop and flourish. You too may isolate yourself in order to become stable for a coming flowering.



**CAPRICORN** (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Spiritual concerns are important now and you desire to help in ways you only paid lip service to in the past. A shift in your sensitivity and confidence will create the groundwork, as you feel more able to make a real difference. You will be a herald of dedication with the opportunity to reach your potential.



**AQUARIUS** (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

With a predominance of planets in Aquarius this month, it will be quite a time for exhalation and renewal. Celebrating your uniqueness will come naturally and anyone you feel restricts you will pay the price of losing you and your trust. Take hold of your dreams and also let them go.



**PISCES** (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

Your social circle widens to include friends that come back into your life and you may also encounter new play mates. You feel the excitement of sharing in the most convivial of settings. You too are a companionable friend with an aura of openness, giving as much as you receive.

*Adrien Dilon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 34 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, [adrien.dilon@gmail.com](mailto:adrien.dilon@gmail.com).*



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